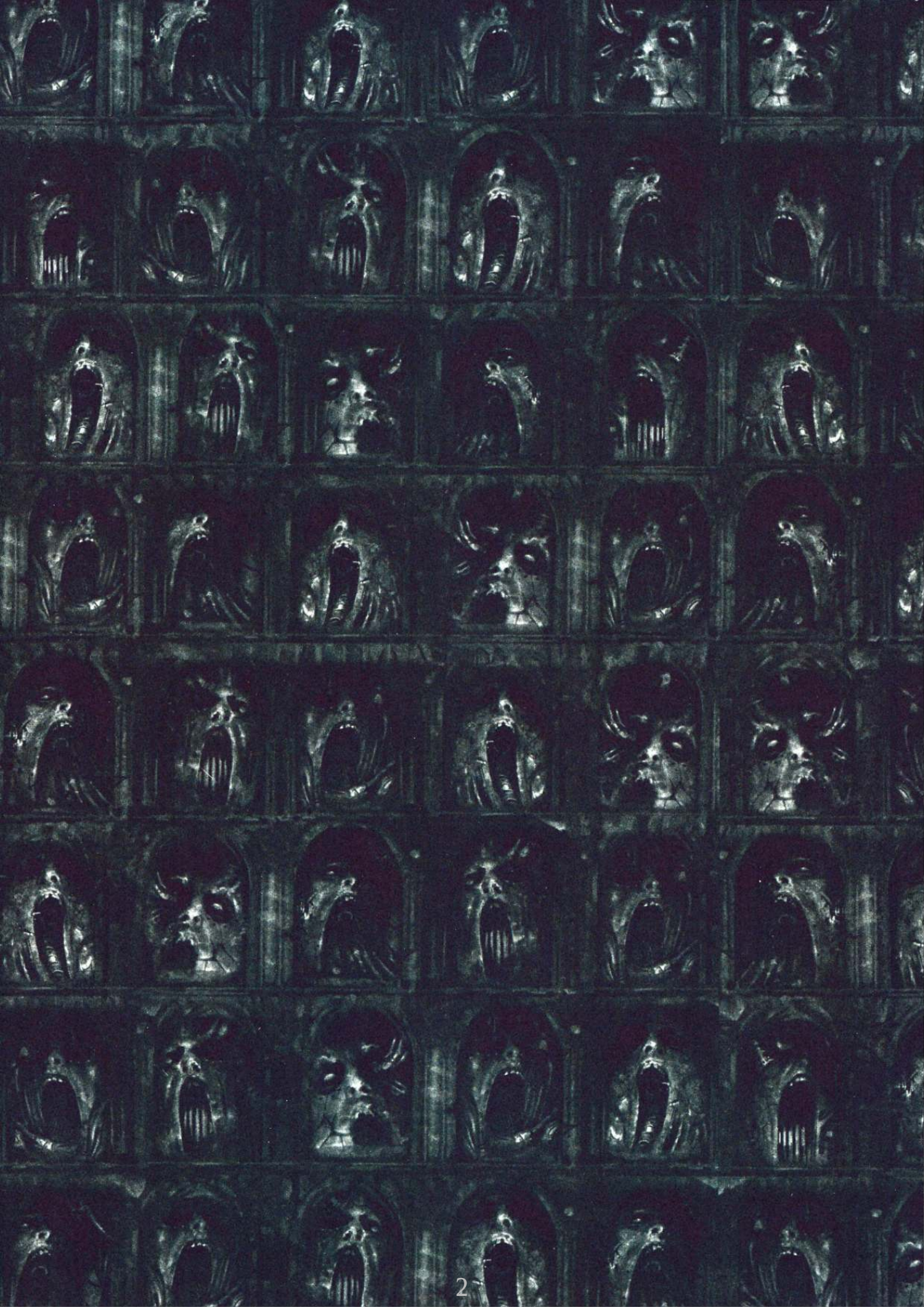
Codex Hereticus
Iron Butchers



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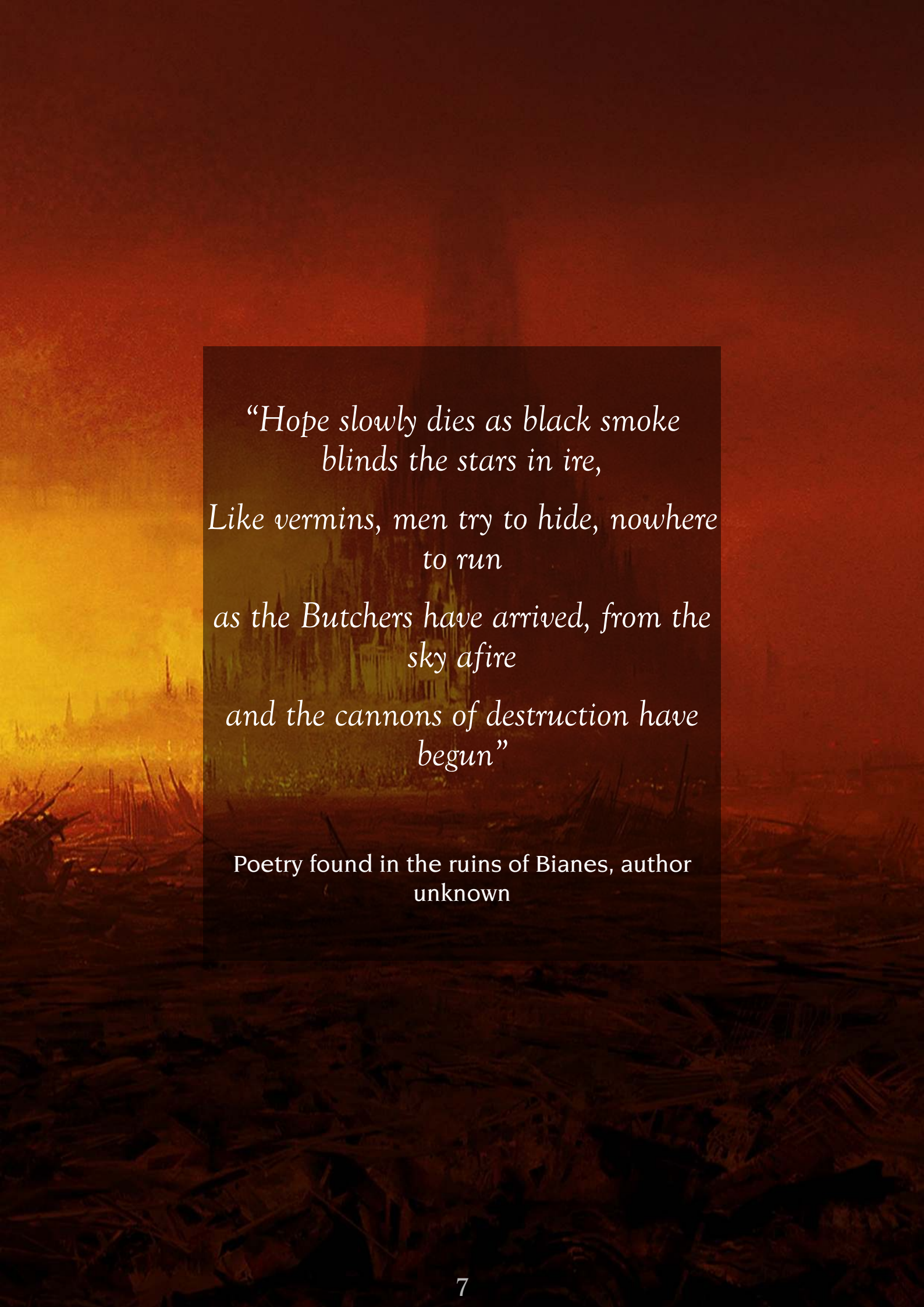
Iron Within

Blood Throughout



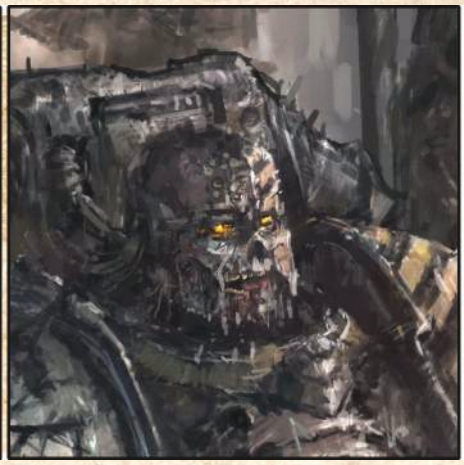
“Hope slowly dies as black smoke blinds the stars in ire,

Like vermins, men try to hide, nowhere to run

as the Butchers have arrived, from the sky afire

and the cannons of destruction have begun”

Poetry found in the ruins of Bianes, author unknown



Iron Butchers

Warriors, soldiers, murderers. Mercenaries, pirates, scavengers. Veterans, survivors, cravens.

They are the traitor fiends clad in blood-drenched iron who have risen from the galaxy's vermin-infested gutters to defy the holiness of the Imperium of Man.

There is no deed too dishonourable,no sin too vile, and no reward to meager for those slaves of Chaos whose only aim is the self-perpetration of an existence of eternal war and bloodshed.

In the war-torn 41st millennium, the galaxy is the theatre of both interplanetary campaigns that span decades and deploy billions of soldiers, and inconsequential yet no less bloody battles fought in its remote corners by a handful of warriors.

Among these smaller yet equally savage forces are the Iron Butchers, a nightmarish mix of the Iron Warriors' absolute, monomaniacal obsession with warfare and the World Eaters' unmatched, blood-frenzied brutality.

They wage war relentlessly, for to stop would be to die. Not only because their warband is a living war machine consuming fuel, ammunition, resources, and the lives of thousands of slaves to sustain itself, but also because their unquenchable bloodlust binds them to the will of the Blood God. Should the slaughter cease, their blades would turn inward, a suicidal offering of their own lives to sate Khorne's hunger for blood and skulls.

Of Blood and Iron

The birth of the Iron Butchers is unclear, as the moment of their foundation happened in the time-twisting real of the Immaterium, yet it could be set during the second half of M39.

Two old allies, if not friends, Iron Warriors 64th Grand Company and the World Eaters 24th Heavy Cadre joined their forces to survive in the hostile galaxy. At the end of the millennia, this unlikely alliance faced the common foe, namely a large Waband of the Emperor's Children led by a Daemon Prince known as the Clawed Worm

As the battle raged, with Iron Warriors tanks breaking the fortresses of the servants of the Dark Prince, and the World Eaters butchering in the name of the Blood God, the Iron Warriors' leader, Warsmith Vhorrax, saw an opportunity to consolidate his power over his World Eaters allies.

In an act of calculated betrayal, the Warsmith left the World Eaters leader to face the Slaaneshi Daemon Prince alone, being slaughtered effortlessly in the confrontation. After the murder, Vhorrax unleashed the concentrated firepower of his tanks and havoc to banish the Daemon Prince, causing the routing of the remaining Emperor's Children.

In the aftermath, he stepped up as sole leader of the two separate warbands, challenging and killing any rival who tried to oppose his command.

No more separate and merely allies, Vhorrax renamed the Warband as the Iron Butchers, and new chorus raised from the ranks.

Iron Within, Blood Throughout.

Terminator Champion Armaguerra, standing victorious in front of a ruined cathedral of the shrine-world of Bianes.

The World Eaters' 24th Heavy Cadre led by Azhoth was known for its reliance on tanks, firepower and the heavy use of the destroyers' squads. Their infamous, widespread scorched earth tactics were followed by the charge of the legionnaires who butchered any living being unfortunate enough to be still alive. After falling into the path of the Blood God, they increasingly began to abandon their ranged tactics, preferring to honour Khorne spilling blood with swords and chainaxes. Yet, they never abandoned their original tactics, trying to bond their war machine with the daemons of the Immaterium.

The 64th Grand Company was an Iron Warriors' Grand Company under the leadership of Warsmith Vhorrax. Their main area of expertise was mechanized infantry that exploited the vast armoury of the IV Legion to support fronlines advance. The Grand Company remained united even after the end of the Heresy, until it broke into smaller warbands after the Dispute of Iron, when Vhorrax and the remenants of the Grand Copany fled Medrengard. Despite Vhorrax's attempt to keep his men from the taint of Chaos, the Blood God's influence started seeping through the ranks long before the alliance with the World Eaters through the loodthirsty Terminator Champion Armaguerra.

Fleeing the Eye of Terror

The Iron Butchers established themselves on the daemon planet taken from the defeated Emperor's Children, Mabelosse. The world soon became a hellish stronghold dotted with forges and fortresses, that allowed the warband to grow in number and strength. Their armoury was such that World Eaters and Iron Warriors kept their ships and tanks, fighting under the same banner but keeping the two sides separated.

As the warband's power rose, Warsmith Vhorrax became bolder, raiding the realspace more often, aiming for bigger prizes each time. He finally laid his eyes upon Cadimio II, an imperial forge-world, a prey that would have bolstered the Iron Butchers' power tenfold, turning the warband from a piratical force into a real army.

The Iron Butchers' fleet exited the Immaterium within Cadimio II star system, annihilating Imperial ships and rapidly deploying the Choas Marines onto the forge world surface. Despite the Mechanicus strenuous defence, the Iron Butchers' victory seemed only a matter of time, when, unexpectedly, a large crusading force of the Black Templar entered the system.

The Space Marines cut through the traitor forces, bolstering the response from the Mechanicum troops, and the forces of Chaos soon found themselves cornered and slaughtered. While they take a heavy tool over their loyalist counterpart, they are ultimately forced to flee back to Mabelosse, leaving a large part of the Warband behind, doomed to die at the hands of the servants of the corpse-Emperor.

On Mabelosse, it was soon clear to Warsmith Vhorrax that the warband was shattered: many traitor Astartes from both the Legions decided to abandon the Iron Butchers, deeming the warband itself as too weak to survive. Left with only a handful of warriors and a single battleship, Vhorrax unwillingly abandoned Mabelosse, unable to maintain an entire planet under his control, and fled from the Eye of Terror.

A DESCENT INTO SAVAGERY

As time passed, the once wealthy and poweful warband became increasingly ragged. Maintaining tanks and weapons became a strenuous operation, and the traitor marines, once richly armed and armoured, started to fight one against another over pieces of functioning technology.

The innumerable deaths among the slaves serving the Chaos Marines made it hard to replace them in such numbers, and the Iron Maw, now the only ship under their control, ended up being dangerously undermanned. With large sections unchecked, warp taint began to spread, and the ship machine spirit, always a savage being, became increasingly wild and rebellious.

With diminished resources, the two sides of the Warband, the World Eaters and the Iron Warriors, didn't have the luxury of living and fighting independently anymore. Despite the Warsmith's steadfastness in resisting the lure of Chaos, the proximity of the XIIth Legion turned the glaze of the Blood God upon the sons of Perturabo as well, and more and more Iron Warriors became enthralled by Khorne's promises of strength and might in exchange for their soul.

The once-proud Warsmith Vhorrax started to feel the touch of the Lord of Skulls upon his mind as well, finding it increasingly difficult to keep his mind cold and calculating.

The warband ended up conducting piratical raids, bartering the looted goods with xenos, and even selling their blades as mercenaries to survive and, more and more often, to satiate their bloodlust.

They left behind any claim over a fixed dominion, travelling the darkest corner of the galaxy as they descended deeper and deeper into the Blood Father's damnation: the Koronus Expanse, the Ghoul Stars, and the Dying Fringes being only a few of the places they haunted through the centuries.

The 42nd Millennium

As the 42nd Millennium dawned, the Iron Butchers stopped wandering through the galaxy to set a permanent hunting ground in a region of space close to the border between Segmentum Pacificus and Obscurus known as the Macanelli's Frontier, finding haven in two newborn warp storms, the Bleeding Sickle and the Hangman's Knot. While still lacking any permanent dominions, the warband would haunt this forsaken region of space and the nearby sector for the Millennia to come.

During centuries since their downfall at the hands of the Black Templars, the Iron Butchers had fallen in complete disgrace and rebuilt their strength over and over again, and with each time, the two sides composing the warband, the World Eaters and the Iron Warriors, have lost a piece of themselves to become something new and increasingly similar.

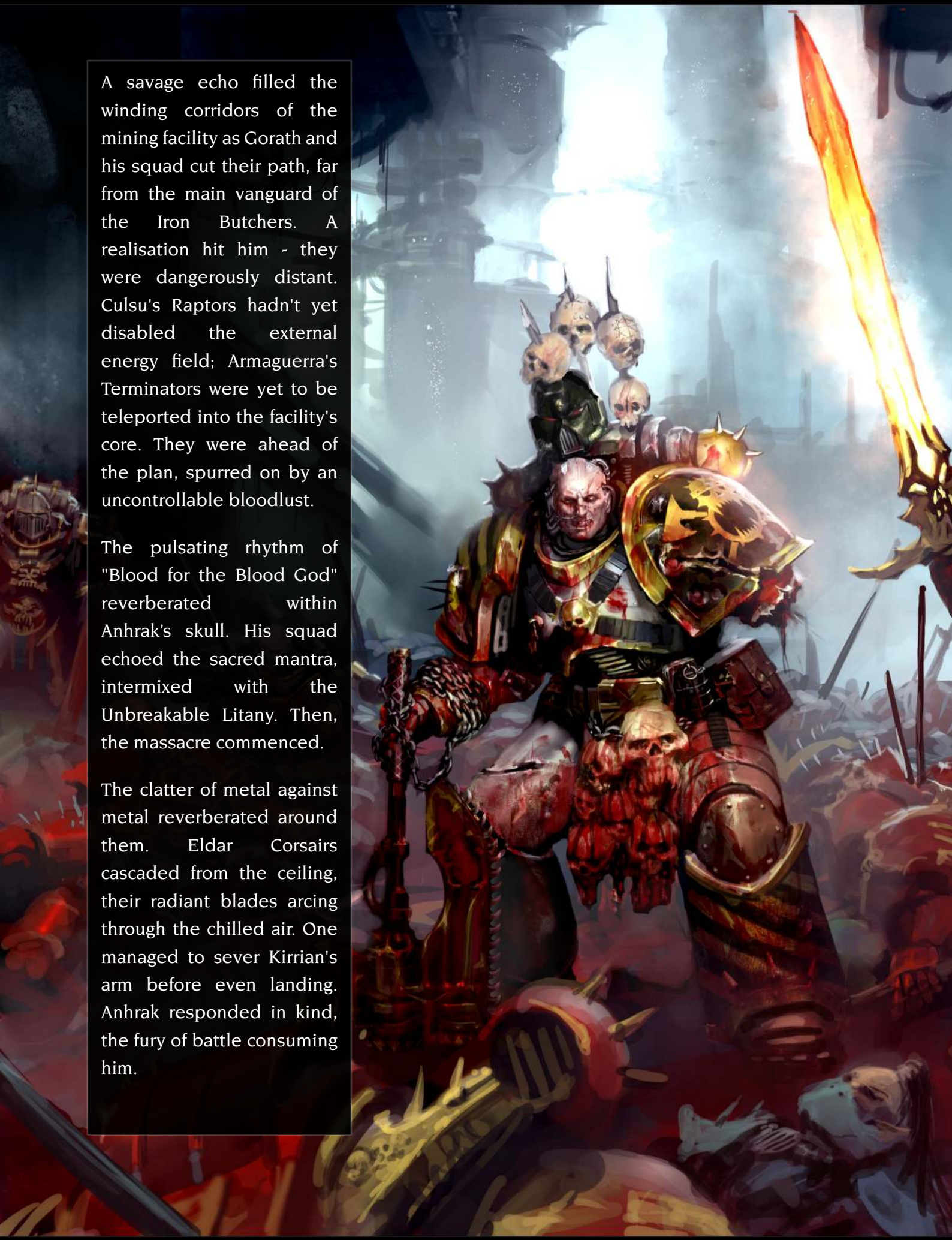
The Iron Butchers have become a single, bloodthirsty entity whose goal is no longer divided by their origins of Iron Warriors or World Eaters. seek only one thing above all: survival in the face of unrelenting hunger for violence and the resources to sustain it. To fight is to live; to pause is to die by either starvation or self-destruction.

The Red Path, once a subtlety walked by the Iron Warriors' members of the warband, is now embraced by more and more legionnaires of the Ivth, the Warsmith himself turned into a living amalgamation of flesh and metal by the whims of Khorne, forever bounded and enslaved within his armour.

The Iron Maw, ancient and defiled, groans with the weight of innumerable modifications that dot her armour and yet, under the command of her newfound Captain, prowls the void as an ancient beast from a darker age.

Countless slaves cultists, and mutants man the ship and follow the warband, growing in number with each successful raid which swells this sea of sub-humanity with new thralls.

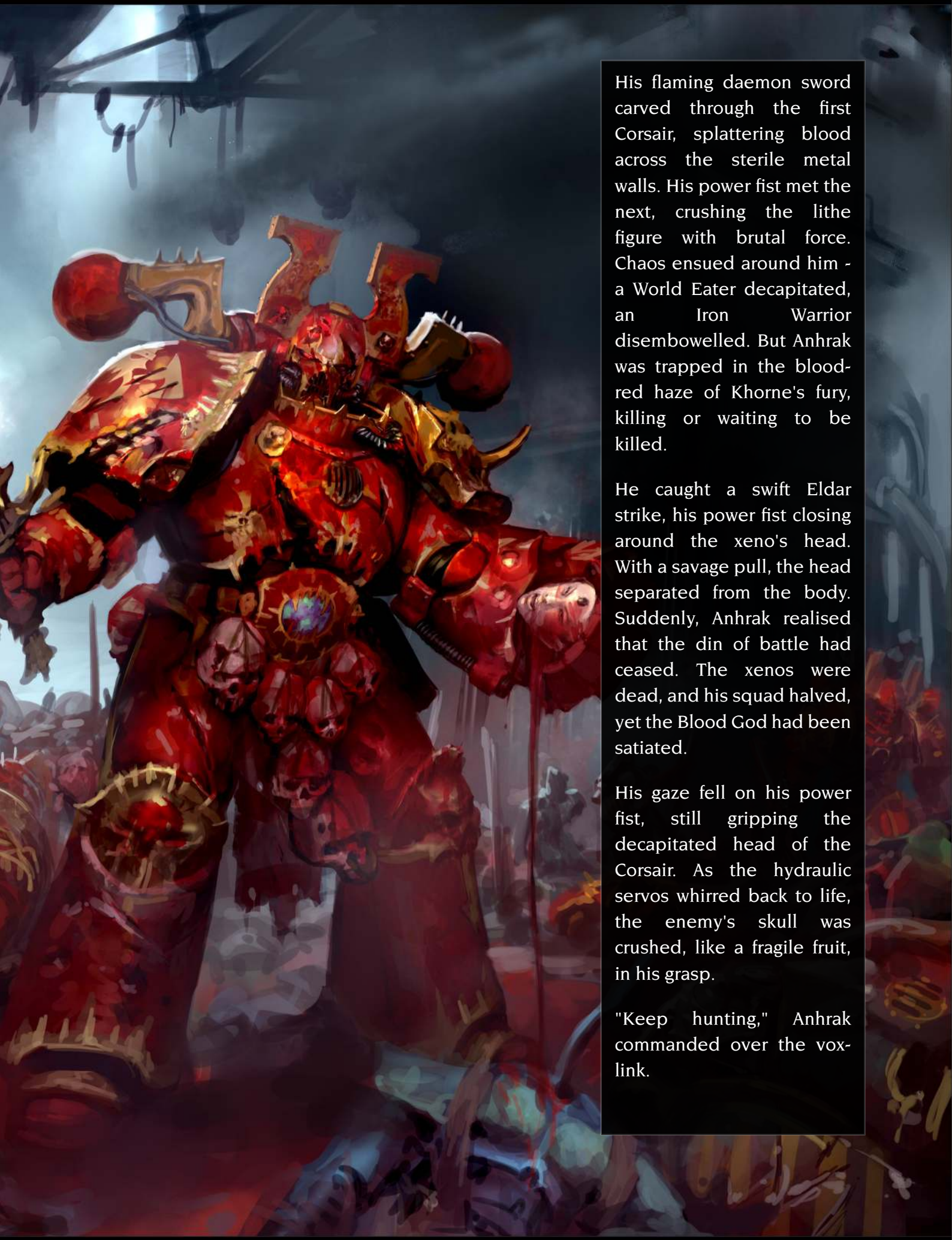
As they march through the battlefield the sky is chocked with the black smoke of the tanks and warmachines manned by the expert Iron Warriors, while the air is filled with the bestial howls of the sons of Angron. Gone is any pretence of nobility or honour the Butchers may have had millennia ago when they still called themselves Astartes, gone is any goal of rebellion against their long-forgotten Emperor. For the Iron Butchers, there is only endless war and slaughter until the day their own skulls will lie at the foot of the Skull Throne.



A savage echo filled the winding corridors of the mining facility as Gorath and his squad cut their path, far from the main vanguard of the Iron Butchers. A realisation hit him - they were dangerously distant. Culsu's Raptors hadn't yet disabled the external energy field; Armaguerra's Terminators were yet to be teleported into the facility's core. They were ahead of the plan, spurred on by an uncontrollable bloodlust.

The pulsating rhythm of "Blood for the Blood God" reverberated within Anhrak's skull. His squad echoed the sacred mantra, intermixed with the Unbreakable Litany. Then, the massacre commenced.

The clatter of metal against metal reverberated around them. Eldar Corsairs cascaded from the ceiling, their radiant blades arcing through the chilled air. One managed to sever Kirrian's arm before even landing. Anhrak responded in kind, the fury of battle consuming him.



His flaming daemon sword carved through the first Corsair, splattering blood across the sterile metal walls. His power fist met the next, crushing the lithe figure with brutal force. Chaos ensued around him - a World Eater decapitated, an Iron Warrior disembowelled. But Anhrak was trapped in the blood-red haze of Khorne's fury, killing or waiting to be killed.

He caught a swift Eldar strike, his power fist closing around the xeno's head. With a savage pull, the head separated from the body. Suddenly, Anhrak realised that the din of battle had ceased. The xenos were dead, and his squad halved, yet the Blood God had been satiated.

His gaze fell on his power fist, still gripping the decapitated head of the Corsair. As the hydraulic servos whirred back to life, the enemy's skull was crushed, like a fragile fruit, in his grasp.

"Keep hunting," Anhrak commanded over the vox-link.

Combat Doctrine

The Iron Butchers have long ago abandoned any semblance of nobility and subtlety on the battlefield.

They advance like living jackhammers, levelling everything in their path with massive firepower until they are close enough to unleash their berserkers.

In the first phases of the conflict, they apply the tactics of the IVth Legion, unleashing a devastating artillery barrage to both weaken enemy positions and provide covering fire for the advance of their armoured infantry.

As they close in on the enemy, the Iron Butchers finally unleash their close-combat spearhead: the hordes of screaming berserkers who butcher everything in their path. Simultaneously, Raptors squads fly over enemy defences, targeting commanders and heavy weapon teams, and releasing toxic weaponry to contaminate the battlefield and disorient enemy troops. With enemy defences shattered, the Iron Butchers' World Eaters Berserkers continue their carnage while the Iron Warriors provide suppressing fire.

Once the enemy is destroyed, masses of cultists and thralls plunder the battlefield for every scrap of weapons, valuable goods, and even living beings that could swell the Iron Maw's slave-crew.

Unfortunately for the Iron Butchers, such a hyper-aggressive approach can be sustained for a very limited time.

The enemy demise must happen quickly or resource constraints, the difficulty adapting to shifting scenarios, and berserkers' rage would soon put the own Warband in jeopardy. Lastly, their reliance on berserkers makes discipline extremely feeble, and the risk of the Khornate turning on their kind is always present.

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Modus Operandi

In their relentless pursuit of bloodshed and resources, the Iron Butchers have become a self-consuming warmachines whose onslaught must be endlessly pushed forward. Although they lack the numbers to establish dominion over a planet, their thirst for war has transformed them into a formidable war machine that constantly hungers for sustenance.

Those pirates know that their lives are hanging by a thread that would be severed as soon as their resources are running out: their vast array of weaponry, their savage daemon engines, and their hyper-aggressive way of war demand a continuous supply of raw materials, technology, and slaves to be maintained.

To satisfy their voracious appetite, the Iron Butchers must constantly hunt for another prey:

solitary vessel, merchant fleets, entire moons and the over populated hives of Imperial planets are some of the game devoured to to fuel theit war machine.

When assaulting entire planets, the Iron Butchers lack the numbers to subjugate them entirely. They target instead critical military hubs, energy nexuses, orbital defence systems, and key government centers with the goal to throw the world into chaos.

Within days these worlds crumble, left without government, infrastructures, and an organized army. Anarchy spreads like plague, allowing the Warband's thralls to move freely among the ruins and plunder like scavenging animals.

They do not stay long, for the resources of a world are always more than they can harvest, so these half-devoured worlds are often not simply abandoned, but sold.

The Iron Butchers trade coordinates, tactical intel, and ingress routes to other Chaos Warbands, renegade factions, xenos empires, or even unscrupulous Rogue Traders, In return they accept payments that pales in comparison to the planet's true worth but serves their immediate needs.

Walking the Red Path

Hundreds are the faces that the essence of the Blood God has worn over untold millennia, from the earliest primitive Terran civilizations worshipping the god of war and blood, to the alien religions of xeno species yet to be discovered.

All of them are nothing but shards of the truth behind the Blood Father, for no mortal mind could ever grasp the magnitude of the entity that is Kharneth.

Khorne, as seen through the shattered lens of the Iron Butchers, is no god of martial honour or epic duels. He is the furnace-heart of endless slaughter, the inevitability of violence incarnate, encased in flesh and metal.

His massive, two-handed chain sword mimics the weapons of the Adeptus Astartes, mightiest among the Blood God's servants who, either willingly or unwillingly, have brought hundreds of thousands of skulls to His throne.

His body is fused to His iron armour, muscles interwoven with cables and wires, for He is the Patron of the hellforges and war machines, and His are the mightiest and most numerous legions of daemon engines among all the Gods of the Dark Pantheon.

His face, encased in a helm of brass and bone, resembles more a savage beast than a god: His gaze lost to an eternity of massacres, His fanged mouth capable only of the primitive grunts and roars of violence. That is enough for the Blood God, for His commands are simple: to kill, or to die in His name.

The Iron Butchers know their war can end only in death, but they do not flee from their doom. For War has no other end but War itself.

"Khorne, or the Blood God, or the Lord of Skulls, or Kharneth, or the Blood Father, or the Eater of Souls, or Laran, or the God of War, or the Lord of Battle, or Gorgeth, or the Master of Murder, or the End of All Things, or Shezmu, or the Lord of Fangs, or the Endless Wrath, or Baphtar, or the Master of Massacre, or the Lord of Carnage..."

- Samabode the gore-mage reciting the first part of "The 888 names of Blood"

To Her Gubernatorial Majesty Elare Detremenegis 48th

By the grace of the God-Emperor I humbly submit the report on the astrogation routes leading to Macanelli's Void. May this information aid in advancing Her Majesty's righteous cause and in the service of Mankind.

As Her Majesty knows, the current situation of the Arthurian Shield remains heterogeneous. While the area is formally under the Pax Imperialis, the reality is that the Imperial presence in the Shield is anything but uniform.

The Arthurian Shield was intended as a bulwark against the warp storms encroaching from the Bleeding Sickle and Hangman's Knot. Yet, despite millennia of fortification efforts, the region remains fragmented and vulnerable, with Imperial forces stretched thin. While recent reinforcements from the Adulators and the creation of beacon planets have bolstered Imperial presence, these measures have done little to counter the loss of Bianes to Chaos, the insurrections in the Nagramos system, or the unrelenting xeno raids on the Rimward sectors.

Circumnavigating the twin warp rifts is perilous. A Rimward approach to the Bleeding Sickle would lead directly into the path of the incoming xeno fleets, while a Coreward journey around the Hangman's Knot, though safer in theory, lacks reliable Astronomican guidance, requiring dozens of calculated jumps through unstable warp routes. Given Her Majesty's urgency in securing the Macanelli's Void treasures, such an option has also to be ruled out

The Fool's Route, though fraught with danger, remains the most viable pathway. The initial stretch, skirting the Reaped Worlds, is rife with pirates and renegades who prey upon Imperial vessels. These desolate systems, corrupted by the warp or overrun by xenos, are havens of lawlessness eager to prey upon any incoming vessel. However, a carefully timed warp jump can bypass their reach, depositing the fleet directly at the threshold of the Dead Man's Strand.

The Strand itself represents the gravest peril—a narrow corridor where two warp storms come dangerously close to meeting. Even the most hardened corsairs fear this region, as the unnatural energies there are said to twist both flesh and steel. Traversing this cursed gap will demand the utmost skill from the fleet's Captains, as well as unwavering faith in the Emperor's protection. It is vital to employ a contingent of holy men and women from the Adeptus Ministorum to bolster the morale and spiritual fortitude of the crew.

Beyond the Dead Man's Strand lies Macanelli's Void—a region shrouded in mystery. This dark expanse is a void in every sense, where stars are few, and the Emperor's light falters. For reason even our best scholars do not fathom, the Astronomican is banished from this region, forcing reliance on short, calculated warp jumps. This absence of guiding light has preserved the region's isolation, but it also harbours untapped resources that could greatly enhance Her Majesty's standing. Yet, the Void is a dwelling place of unknown threats, as the few ships that have managed to come back speak of uncanny phenomena: flickering auspex readings, phantom echoes, and moments where the void itself seems expand or retreat as a living entity.

Despite these dangers, the Void's potential cannot be ignored. To claim it before rival factions or the enemies of Mankind would be a monumental achievement, securing untold resources and cementing Her Majesty's legacy. I recommend immediate action to prepare a fleet, with every precaution taken to ensure its success.

May the Emperor's light guide your path and grant His blessing upon this endeavor,

Astrogator Majoris .....
Officio Cartograficus, Azura Sector

Unknown Xeno
Migrant Fleets
Bleeding
Sickle
Arthurian
Shield
Reaped Worlds
Macanelli's
Void
Dead Man's Strait
Fool's Route
Hangman's Knot
Rimward
Trailing
Spinward
Coreward
Lightyears
0 20 40 60 80 100

The Burning of Bianes

For decades, the shrine world of Bianes stood as the crown jewel and symbol of the Ecclesiarchy's unity in the, otherwise, fragmented Arthurian Shield: a frontier area of the galaxy where Imperial control is frail, bolstered only by the proximity to the Azura, Latila, and Dhoregean Sector and long-standing ties with their military and political forces.

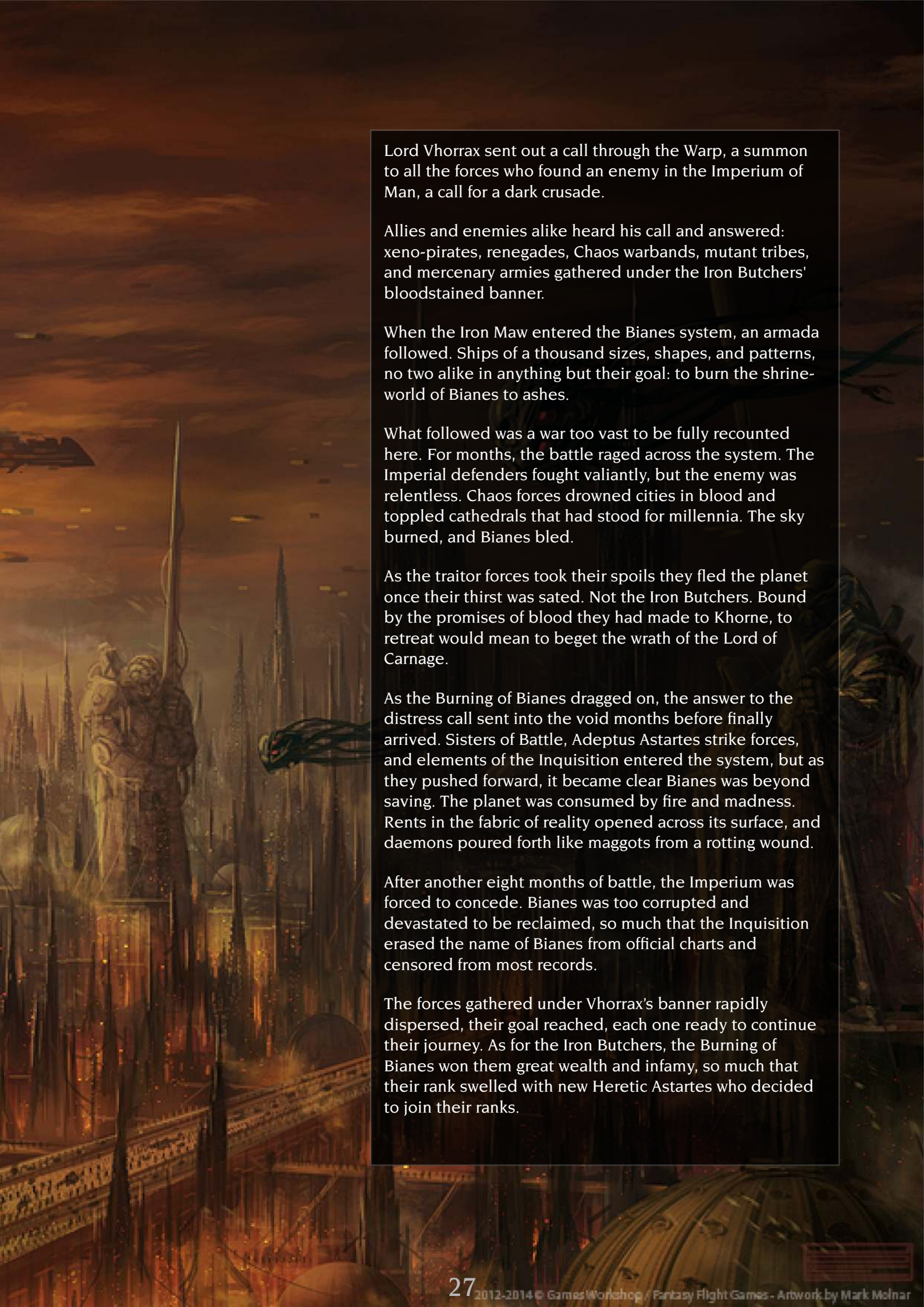
Spires of white marble and bursnihed gold rose for kilometres into the skies, and pilgrims from three neighbouring sectors traveled for years to pay homage to the sacred relics and holy sanctuaries of the planet.

In 435.M41, Bianes announced it would host a grand celebration for the Day of the Emperor, an event of gargantuan proportions designed to project Imperial splendour across the Segmentum. It was a political and religious occasion, meant to reaffirm ancient alliances and forge new ones among the Imperium's nobility and religious elite, establishing Bianes as cornerstone of the Shield, and reinforcing the Imperial presence in the area.

The celebration began a hundred days before the Emperor's Day itself, with operas and passion plays recounting the legends of the Emperor's life and His crusade across the stars being hosted daily. Billions of pilgrims flooded Bianes, accompanied by Noble Houses, sector governors, and countless high-ranking dignitaries. With them came entire regiments of the Astra Militarum and dozens of private armies raised by the wealthy and powerful.

For a time, Bianes became one of the most well-defended worlds in the region but in doing so it also became a beacon for xenos, pirates, and traitor forces who started to plague the nearby void areas, hunting for isolated vessels. Still, Bianes was too heavily fortified to be assaulted by those renegade forces.

Among those drawn to its light were the Iron Butchers, ever hungry for slaughter and plunder. But were other wanted just to hunt for the small vessels that, like moth to the flames, revolved around Bianes, Lord Vhorrax plan was way more ambitious: he wanted to conquer and burn the shrine world into a galactic pyre in the name of Khorne.



Lord Vhorrax sent out a call through the Warp, a summon to all the forces who found an enemy in the Imperium of Man, a call for a dark crusade.

Allies and enemies alike heard his call and answered: xeno-pirates, renegades, Chaos warbands, mutant tribes, and mercenary armies gathered under the Iron Butchers' bloodstained banner.

When the Iron Maw entered the Bianes system, an armada followed. Ships of a thousand sizes, shapes, and patterns, no two alike in anything but their goal: to burn the shrine-world of Bianes to ashes.

What followed was a war too vast to be fully recounted here. For months, the battle raged across the system. The Imperial defenders fought valiantly, but the enemy was relentless. Chaos forces drowned cities in blood and toppled cathedrals that had stood for millennia. The sky burned, and Bianes bled.

As the traitor forces took their spoils they fled the planet once their thirst was sated. Not the Iron Butchers. Bound by the promises of blood they had made to Khorne, to retreat would mean to beget the wrath of the Lord of Carnage.

As the Burning of Bianes dragged on, the answer to the distress call sent into the void months before finally arrived. Sisters of Battle, Adeptus Astartes strike forces, and elements of the Inquisition entered the system, but as they pushed forward, it became clear Bianes was beyond saving. The planet was consumed by fire and madness. Rents in the fabric of reality opened across its surface, and daemons poured forth like maggots from a rotting wound.

After another eight months of battle, the Imperium was forced to concede. Bianes was too corrupted and devastated to be reclaimed, so much that the Inquisition erased the name of Bianes from official charts and censored from most records.

The forces gathered under Vhorrax's banner rapidly dispersed, their goal reached, each one ready to continue their journey. As for the Iron Butchers, the Burning of Bianes won them great wealth and infamy, so much that their rank swelled with new Heretic Astartes who decided to join their ranks.

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WORLD EATERS

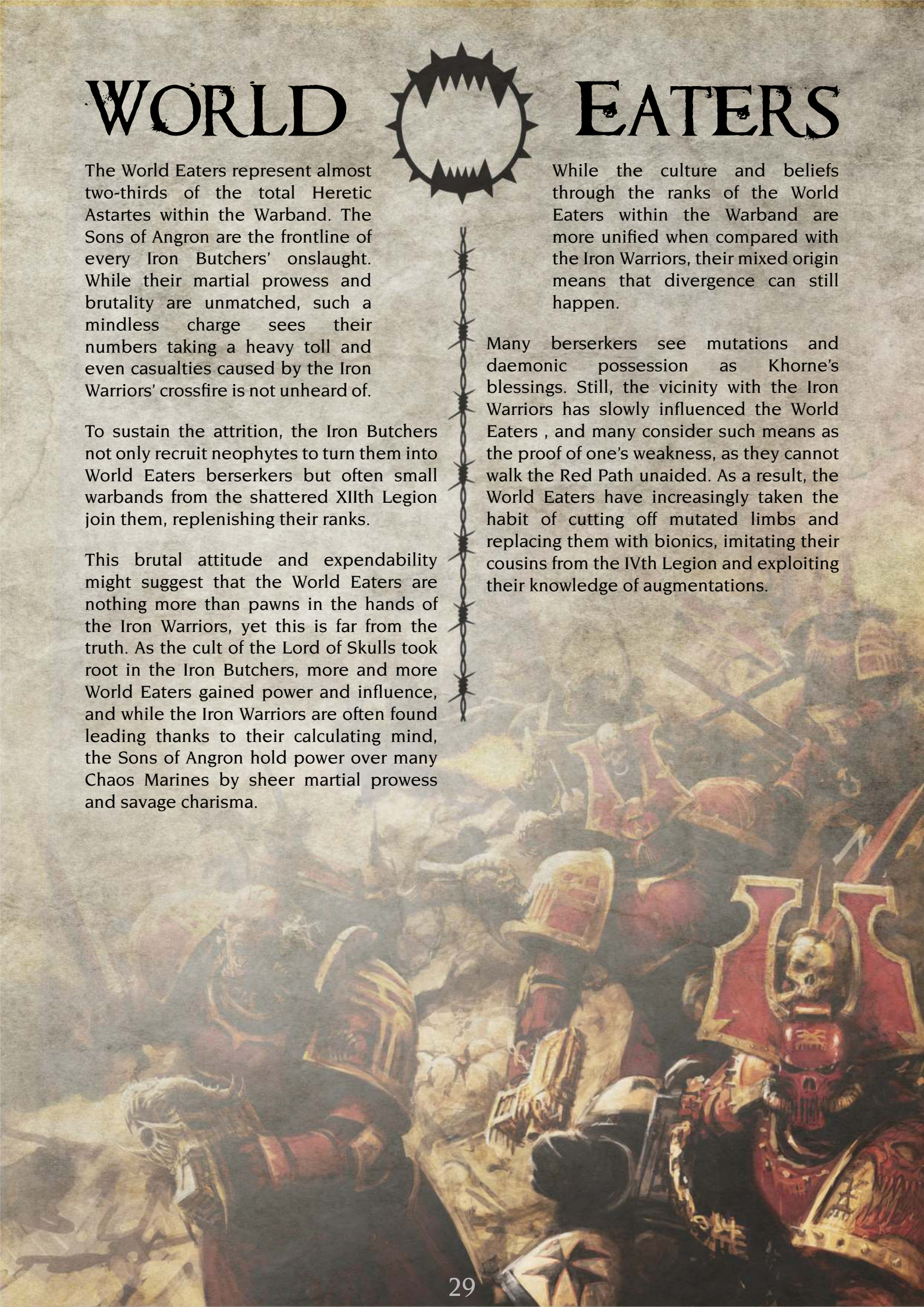
The World Eaters represent almost two-thirds of the total Heretic Astartes within the Warband. The Sons of Angron are the frontline of every Iron Butchers' onslaught. While their martial prowess and brutality are unmatched, such a mindless charge sees their numbers taking a heavy toll and even casualties caused by the Iron Warriors' crossfire is not unheard of.

To sustain the attrition, the Iron Butchers not only recruit neophytes to turn them into World Eaters berserkers but often small warbands from the shattered XIIth Legion join them, replenishing their ranks.

This brutal attitude and expendability might suggest that the World Eaters are nothing more than pawns in the hands of the Iron Warriors, yet this is far from the truth. As the cult of the Lord of Skulls took root in the Iron Butchers, more and more World Eaters gained power and influence, and while the Iron Warriors are often found leading thanks to their calculating mind, the Sons of Angron hold power over many Chaos Marines by sheer martial prowess and savage charisma.

While the culture and beliefs through the ranks of the World Eaters within the Warband are more unified when compared with the Iron Warriors, their mixed origin means that divergence can still happen.

Many berserkers see mutations and daemonic possession as Khorne's blessings. Still, the vicinity with the Iron Warriors has slowly influenced the World Eaters , and many consider such means as the proof of one's weakness, as they cannot walk the Red Path unaided. As a result, the World Eaters have increasingly taken the habit of cutting off mutated limbs and replacing them with bionics, imitating their cousins from the IVth Legion and exploiting their knowledge of augmentations.



Iron Warriors

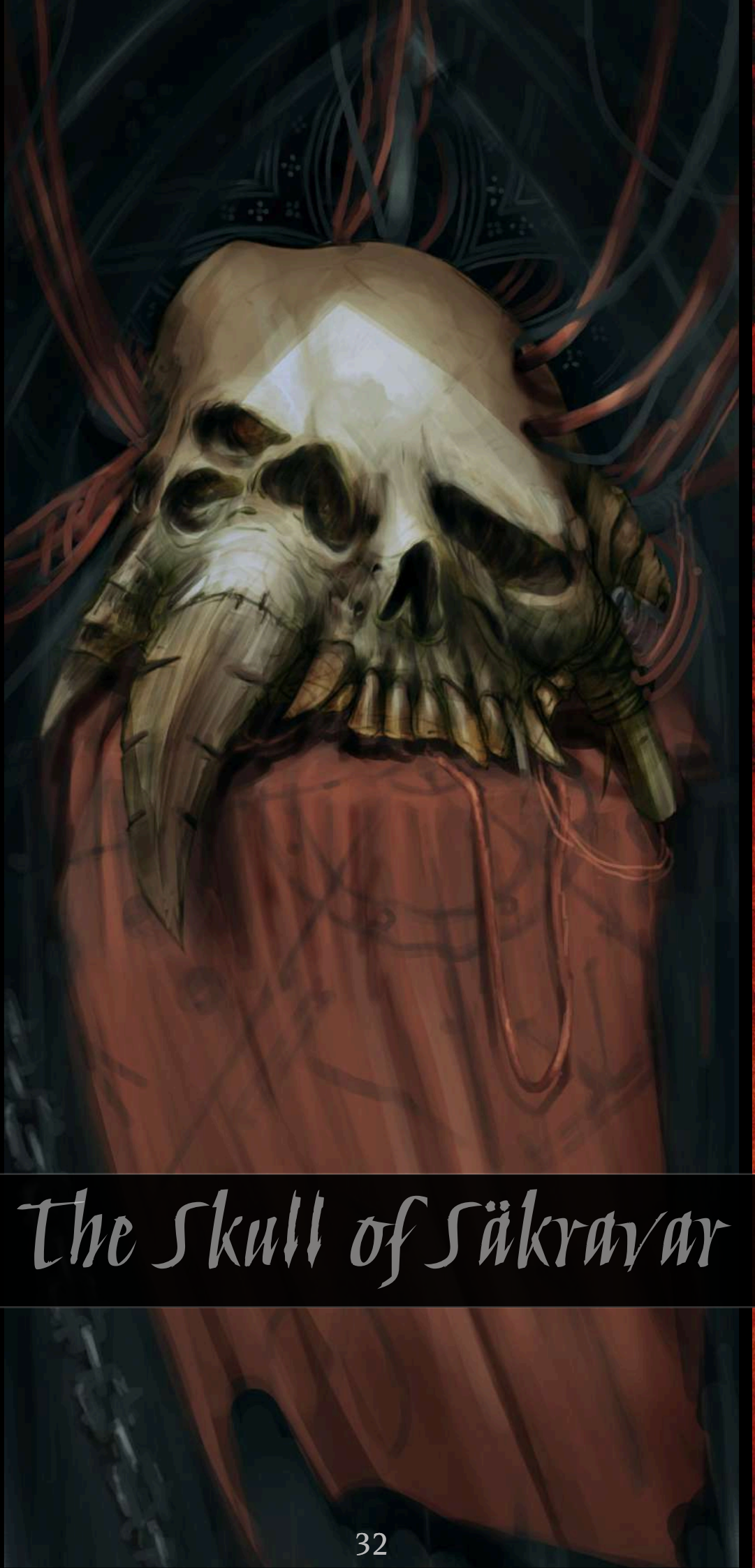
While the Sons of Olympia represent the minority within the Iron Butchers, their contribution to the Warband is by no means secondary: the Iron Warriors technological expertise is paramount to maintain the scarce technological resources of the warband, and their concentrated firepower often opens the way to the final assault of the World Eaters.

While differences can be found amongst the World Eaters, the Iron Warriors of the Iron Butchers are even more diverse: some hold on to the old beliefs, trying to ignore the voices of the Dark Gods, other have accepted the nature of Chaos, although as a whole entity instead of worshipping any specific God, and finally, many have started to walk the Red Path, lead by their bloodthirsty allies from the XIIth Legion.

The ones who still haven't fall to the call of the Blood Father, either for through pure iron will or by whorshipping Chaos as a whole, have managed to maintain a stronger link to their roots, keeping their minds sharp and cold.

But even for those who have crossed the line and walks down the Red Path, the fate is not as obvious as it may seem.

Some of them fully embrace the savage nature of Khorne, becoming frenzied berserker not different from the World Eaters, others keep part of their cold nature, embracing the fact that the warmongering nature of the IVth Legion is nothing but one of the many faces of the God of War, and so they offer to Khorne not blood and skulls reaped with swords and axes, but lives and souls harvested with heavy bolters and autocannons.



The Skull of Säkravar

As much as the Adeptus Astartes still loyal to the Emperor of Mankind preserve and venerate holy relics from their past, the lost and the damned treasure their blasphemous dark relics: a page taken from an unholy tome written by a Daemon Prince, the shard of the power armour of one of the traitor Primarchs, or knife said to have taken the life of an Imperial Saint.

Yet, such things are of little interest to the Iron Butchers, for whom the only true alter of the Dark Gods is the battlefield, the only offering is blood and souls. They see the dogmatic veneration of such things as foolishness at best, and weakness at worst.

Dark relics have fallen into their hands, conquered from defeated warbands or found during their wandering through the forgotten corners of the Immaterium, only to be traded or bartered to the better offered in exchange for more utilitarian goods.

For this reason, the Skull of Säkravar stands out as an oddity, being the only chaotic relic that has found a permanent place within the Warband, lying enshrined in an obscure chamber within the belly of the Iron Maw and accessed only by a few selected warriors.

It is not known who Säkravar was, some say he was a human being from an unknown world, who lived millennia before the times of the Great Crusade, others that he was a powerful Black Legion Chaos Lord who would not be born until the 43rd Millenia, whose skull has flowed upstream the tides of time of the Immaterium. What is known is his fate: Säkravar unholy power grew to such magnitude that he finally obtained daemonhood by the will of the Gods of Chaos undivided, yet his lust for power made him blind to the envy of his right-hand man: as Säkravar reached the apotheosis his second-in-command, blinded by bitterness, struck a deadly blow on his master, killing him as he was still in the process of attaining daemonhood.

The champion of Chaos collected Säkravar's head, a twisted thing neither completely human nor daemonic, to keep it as a personal trophy. Since that day, the Skull of Säkravar has changed hands dozens of times, sought after by the Chaos Legions eager to control its power, until the Iron Butchers succeeded in conquering the unholy relic somewhere during M40.

It's said that the skull still contains the soul of Säkravar, forever trapped in a limbo between mortal death and daemonhood.

Maddened by millennia of agony and rage, his voice babbles about the Chaos Gods' untold secrets that were unfolded to him seconds before his death, but that he never got the chance to fully understand.

To indulge in his blasphemous rant is to invite madness, for mortal minds aren't made for such knowledge, but amidst the thousand maniac voices there are a few who speak of great, if forbidden, mysteries.

More than once Lord Vhorrax addressed the Skull in search of forgotten treasures, unknown pathways, or dark secrets about his enemies. Each time, the voices of Säkravar, filled with agony and rage, were channelled through the minds of unlucky sacrifical psykerss. These unfortunate souls expended as conduits, their psyches shattered as they contained and filtered the torrent of chaotic knowledge until only the real answers were found.

LORDS OF CHAOS

Chaos is capricious and unpredictable by nature, and so are its followers.

Endless feuds and battles for power are commonplace within every Chaos Warband, and it comes as no surprise that many Warbands do not meet their doom at the hands of an external enemy but simply collapsing and crumbling under the weight of their own treacherous nature.

The Iron Butchers are no different, and are even more inclined to internal struggles due to their dual nature: World Eaters and Iron Warriors forced to coexist in order to survive. The only thing holding them together is not brotherhood or faith in the Blood God, but their masters' iron grip.

Many are the Heretic Astartes who have distinguished themselves among the lower Space Marines: aspiring champions, warpsmiths, and heretics blessed by Khorne itself. Yet, amongst all of them, only four have established themselves as the cornerstone of the Warband, the real masters of the Iron Butchers, whose authority is never questioned: Warsmith Vhorrax, Culsu the Black, Skhraal "Skullface", and Armaguerra.
Those are the four Lords of Chaos, the Champions of Khorne that keep the Warband united by sheer brute force.In the next pages we are going to know their story

WARSMITH VHORRAX

The living war machine that is now Lord Vhorrax, wrapped in chains and skulls, runes and spikes, was once a proud son of Perturabo, whose belief in the purity of iron was absolute.

His descent into Chaos began when he allied with the World Eaters of Azoth, later orchestrating Azoth's assassination to seize power over both factions. In his arrogance, he believed he could use the World Eaters as nothing more than an expendable tool.

But the treacheries of the Dark Gods are never so easily controlled. As his new warband carved a bloody path through the stars, the Blood God, already watching through the worship of Angron's sons, turned his gaze upon Perturabo's heir.

Vhorrax's hands were soaked in the gore of slain rivals and xeno warlords. He made no offerings to Khorne, yet that mattered little to the Lord of Carnage. Blood is blood, whether offered or not.

Still, Vhorrax resisted the boons of Khorne with unyielding will. When his hands twisted into claws, he severed and replaced them with bionics. As the voices in his skull howled for slaughter, he forced his mind to remain cold, calculative.

If the Blood Father was displeased or amused by this defiance, no one can say. But on the frozen moon of Herral II, the struggle reached its end. Facing a horde of greenskins, Vhorrax carved his way to the xeno Warboss. The duel was quick and brutal. His thunder hammer caved in the Warboss's skull but the creature's dying spasms drove its claw into Vhorrax's chest, crushing the life from him

And yet, death did not come: in a final blessing, or jest, Khorne breathed new life into Vhorrax's dead body: his armour groaned as it regained his original form, and within, his flesh changed, not simpply fusing with but completely mutating and merging with the Cataphractii suit itself, becoming something more than the sum of the two parts.

His muscles were remade with brass, and his bones with steel. Boiling oil coursed through his veins, and dead organs were reborn as unholy machineries. His ancient heavy flamer was fused to his arm, and his helmet forever sealed to his face.

Burning runes etched themselves into his plates. Red-hot chains forged from thin air lashed to his back, both symbols and tools of his binding to the Blood God.

Since that day, the powers of Vhorrax have swelled as he learned and grew used to his new nature. And yet, with this power comes anger and loathing, for Khorne and himself, for he knows that he is now no more than a slave. A powerful one, but a slave nonetheless.

Moments of clarity grow rarer with each battle, as the once-proud Iron Warrior who was Warsmith Vhorrax now steps onto the battlefield not with the Unbreakable Litany on his lips, but with a new chant erupting from the furnace-grill that is now his mouth:
BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD!

CORPSEGRINDER

No other weapon symbolizes the Iron Butchers as the fearsome chain hammer wielded by their leader. Known as "Corpsegrinder," this massive weapon was once "Gate Crasher", a master-crafted thunder hammer bestowed upon Vhorrax the day he was named Warsmith.

The idea for Corpsegrinder came to him attending the fighting pits of Kurse, deep within the Screaming Vortex. There, Vhorrax watched a mutant crushing his enemies with a primitive chain-hammer. The weapon was crude and unwieldy, little more than a toy compared to any Astartes weapon, yet Vhorrax was inspired by such brutality.

Rather than forging a new weapon, the Warsmith chose to transform Gate Crasher, that has once been a symbol of loyalty towards the Imperium, into a violent tool of destruction in the name of the Blood God. But reworking such an ancient relic without destroying it completely required genius and madness in equal measure.

For years, Vhorrax laboured alongside Warpsmith Varago of the World Eaters, a master of both technology and daemonolatry. The shard of a rune daemon weapon, chain-teeth carved from a Furia's leviathan, the marrow of a dead Imperial saint to anoint the core, and even a plate of brass torn from a Bloodthirster's armour were but a few of the dark relics collected through Materium and Immaterium alike to forge Vhorrax's masterpiece.

At last, the time came. Vhorrax and Varago sealed themselves in the forge-chamber deep within the Iron Maw. Accompanying them were eight living sacrifices, each a symbolic offer to the Blood God in its own way. For eight days and eight nights they worked, completely detached from the outside world.

When they emerged, Vhorrax hand was gripped around Corpsegrinder, still red-hot from the forge.

What happened in the forge-chamber is not known, only speculated. Some say that the sacrifices were simply offered to grant the weapon the blessing of the Lord of Battle. Others believe a far stranger truth, that Varago immolated their lives to summon one of the furnace-daemon who spend their existing smithing weapons in the forges of Khorne's realm, and that the daemon itself helped hammer Corpsegrinder into existence.

But with Khorne, such distinctions matters not. Corpsegrinder now exists. And with it, a new path of blood and carnage is carved across the stars.

- Lord Vhorrax walks triumphantly over the remains
of a Night Lords' Dreadnought, armed with
his chainhammer "Corpsegrinder" and his heavy-flamer "Hope Burner" -

CULSU THE BLACK

Few names within the Iron Butchers are mantled in mysteries as Culsu, for he seldom speaks about himself, or at all. The rare instances when he cars to share his thoughts, his words are a bastardized mix of Low Gothic and the guttural clicks of his lost homeworld, Gammurlia.

Culsu was once a sergeant of the Legio Destroyer within the XIIth Legion, embracing the enemy's total annihilation, and considering no weapon too brutal or dishonourable to achieve his goals After the Heresy, Culsu fell completely into the adoration of the Khorne, finding in the Lord of Carnage the perfect reflection of the savage war-god his people once worshipped.

Culsu cares nothing for honor, loyalty, or power: only raw strength and slaughter. His unwavering dedication to butchery has earned him Khorne's favor: his strength and endurance far exceed his kin, and a jagged Collar of Khorne erupted from his armor's gorget, marking him as a chosen of the Blood God.

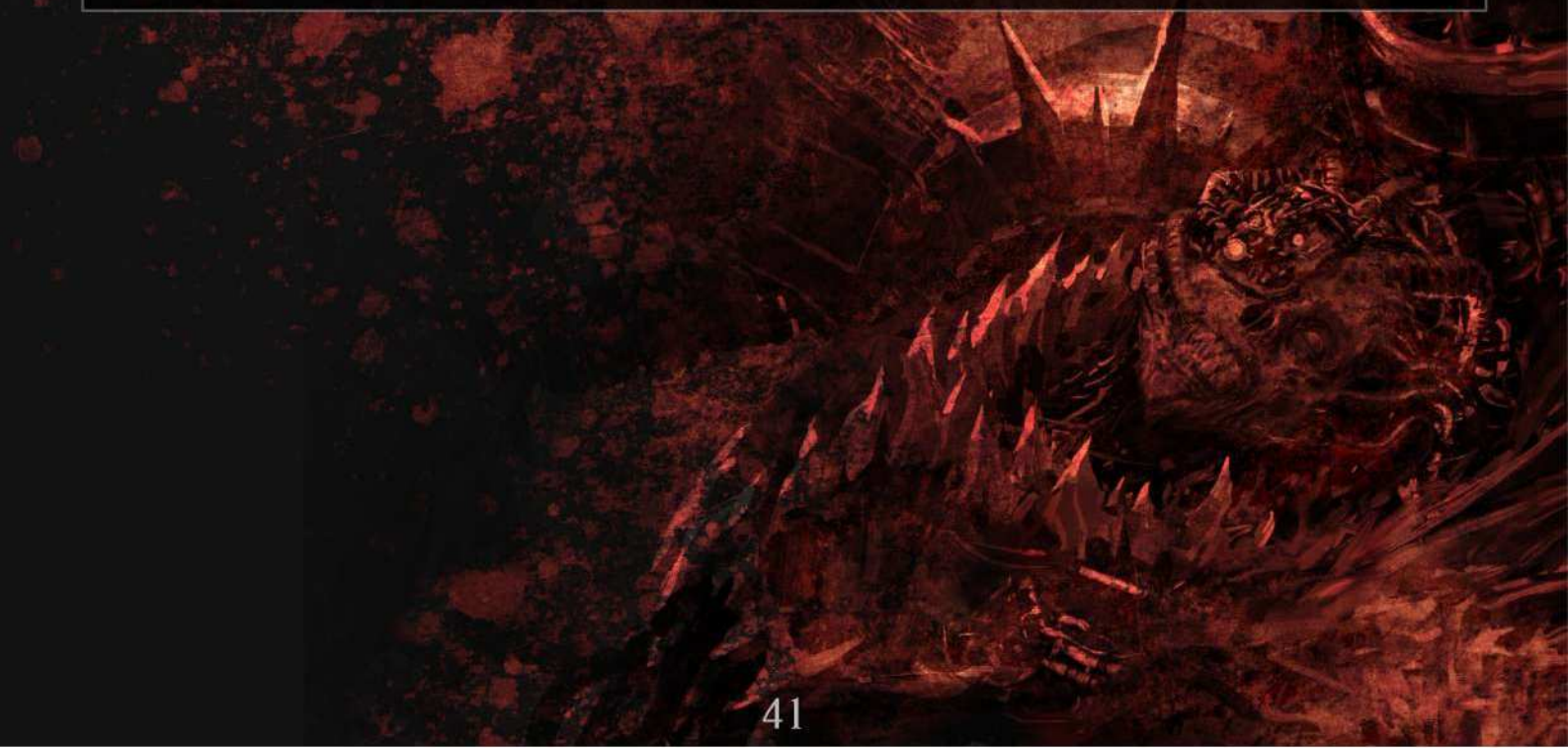
The radioactive and toxic weapons of the Legio Destroyers have turned his body into a cluster of scorched flesh and seared muscle. Tumorous growths and necrotic flesh forced him to replace much of his body with bionics: his armour plates bolted to raw flesh, mechanical lungs rasping with every breath, and a brutal, agumentic claw in place of his lost left hand. His skin, where it remains, is a patchwork of charred flesh and scar tissue. Even his armour isn't untouched, with the old colours of his Legion burned black and never repainted.

Despite it total disdain for personal influence, the unholy aura Culsu emits is more than enough for the other Wolrd Eaters to look up to him as a leader, and rally after him despite his willingness to lead. Surely, many see him as an opponent or a mighty champion whose skull would elevate them amongst the Blood Father's favourites, but many have challenged Culsu in the fighting pit or tried to cut him down in the midst of battle. None have succeeded, and none have survived.

Lord Vhorrax has long ago recognized the importance of Culsu within the Iron Butchers beyond his undeniable power and his knowledge of destroyer tactics that make him a valuable asset for the Iron Warriors' ways of war. Culsu's grasp over the World Eaters is the only thing that maintains the Sons of Angron in a semblance of order, and that keeps them from rebelling against their cousins of the Ivth Legion. So Vhorrax keeps him close and under his gaze, for if Culsu would fall, there would be no guarantee that the Warband would break in two, consumed by the bersekes' rage finally unleashed.

As for culsu, it doesn't matter. As long as the Iron Butchers march to war, as long as blood is shed, Culsu has no reason to turn on his Warsmith.

For now.



Saint Eater

Many names and monikers have been attributed to Culsu across the centuries of carnage and bloodshed with which he has afflicted the galaxy. In the Dhoregean Sector, he is known as the Black Bane; in the Screaming Vortex, he earned the title Rageclaw for the savage precision with which he mangled foes using his mechanical talon. For the Iron Butchers, he is simply the Black, a name earned for his fire-blackened armour.

But no epithet is as hideous or blasphemous as the one he earned during the Burning of Bianes: the Saint Eater.

As often happened, Culsu's raptors were tasked with a high-altitude strike mission, bypassing the outer defenses of Bianes' shrine-fortress to sabotage key defensive systems. The Black himself led the assault, swiftly tearing through entrenched defenders and dismantling the enormous anti-artillery guns embedded deep in the enemy's lines.

With his mission complete, he gave himself wholly to slaughter. For hours, Culsu and his raptors rampaged through the shrine-city, butchering both soldiers and civilians in a spree of ritualistic bloodletting. Whether guided by fate, a hunter's instinct, or the unseen hand of Khorne himself, the raptors eventually reached the shrine's highest spire.

There, surrounded by their doomed honour guard, stood the twin living saints: Ebera and Camiro.

The elite defenders made a final, valiant stand but they were no match for the Eaters of Worlds. Once the bloodbath ended, the saints were alone.

What followed was a scene of apocalyptic savagery. Discarding their weapons, the raptors descended upon the saints barehanded, tearing into flesh with jagged teeth and bloodied claws.

At the height of the massacre, Culsu tore the still-beating heart from Saint Camiro and devoured it.

It is said that Khorne was so amused by the sheer brutality he has witnessed that he granted his blessing upon the Black Bane's claw, which now cut flesh and metal alike to reach the heart of his enemies in a memento of that ominous day.

SKHRAAL SKULLFACE

Born on Bodt, Skhraal was once a swordsman with such skills that neither the butchers' nails nor the blind rage of Khorne managed to erase, turning it into a brutal, yet controlled, tornado of violence.

After centuries spent in the service of the Blood God, the once-master duelist has turned into a hunter prowling the battlefield reaping the skulls of the greatest enemies to lay them at the feet of the skull throne. With every head he has taken, his lure over the dwellers of the Immaterium became stronger until when, finally, someone…something finally laid its eyes upon Skhraal's soul.

Through the endless river of blood that Skhraal shed, he drawn the attention of Ger'draagha, a daemon of the hunt born from the death-duels of a long-lost xeno civilization, where entire populations immolated themselves in ritual-combats lasting weeks. Silent and patient, Ger'draagha seeped into Skhraal's armour unnoticed, feeding on the blood and souls Skhraal spilled on the battlefield and empowering Skhraal's powers beyond even his gene-enhanced limits in retun.

At first, Skhraal believed these growing powers were his own but as the daemon's whispers grew louder he realised that his soul had not been his own for decades. By then, it was too late for cutting the bond. To tear Ger'draagha out would have left him broken and diminished, unable to serve the Blood God in any way but offering his own skull to the throne. Reclutantly, Skhraal embraced the daemon's power, binding it fully to his soul to the neverborn, and reaching new heights of violence.

The corruption, subtle so far, sprouted externally: mouths, fangs, talons, and eyes grew on its armour mirroring the corruption of the World Eaters' soul.

In a move that shocked many within the Iron Butchers, Skhraal swore unwavering loyalty not to his World Eater brethren, but to Lord Vhorrax. The reasons remain unknown. Some believe the Vhorrax knowledge of daemonology is such that he holds power of Ger'draagha, so that Skhraal is forced into total obedience. Others suggest Skhraal sees Vhorrax as the ultimate prey: an apex predator biding his time before the final kill.

Regardless of the truth, Skhraal has become Vhorrax's most lethal enforcer bearing multiple, gruesome titles: Lord Gorehound, Master of the Execution and, most significantly, Vhorrax's Headhunter.

On the battlefield, Skhraal hunts the mightiest champions, carving through warlords, xenos elites, and Imperial heroes alike. More times than even Vhorrax realizes, Skhraal's solitary hunts and offerings of powerful skulls have turned Khorne's gaze back to the Iron Butchers' favour, granting victories where defeat seemed inevitable.

Yet Skhraal does not fight for victory or glory. It is the hunt that drives him: the endless pursuit of stronger prey, each kills another step in a savage journey with no end but death.

Vindication Denied

During his times under the Emperor's banner Skhraal has achieved incredible victories in the fighting pits, both against his brothers from the XIIth and Astartes from different Legions.

Still, a friendly foe constantly outmatched him in duels, always proving his skills as not enough.

His name was Astys Vassoyr from the Raven Guard. Like many sons of Corax, Vassoyr's fighting style was based on speed and agility, which he used to counter Skhraal's strength and raw power.

What was a friendly rivalry in the beginning, slowly turned into open hostility as the butchers' nails eroded Skhraal's mind.

The World Eater became more and more aggressive, yet the result never changed: Vassoyr always outmached Skhraal.

Outraged, after their last duel Skhraal swore that, if they would have met into the battlefield instead of an arena, he would have killed the Raven Guard with no effort.

The words sounded like an empty even if chilling threat to the Raven Guard.

Unbeknownst to both, it was only a matter of time before that threat had the chance to be proven true.

During the betrayal of Istvaan V, Skhraal and Vassyr finally met on the battlefield as the World Eaters had hoped.

Skhraal's falx blades clashed against the Ravven Guard's lightning claws. Blood was shed, and both the once-friend Astartes suffered great wounds, but one was able to prevail.

Finally, Skhraal managed to open a breach in Vassoyr's defences. In that split second he had to choose: strike a final blow, or hold back, for the opening in the enemy's defence could have been nothing but a trick. But before Skhraal could choose a stray plasma round incinerated Vassoyr head.

Skhraal mind broke.

The swordsman ran amok, butchering friends and foes alike until the battle was over.

Some say that Skhraal's obsession with hunting was born that day, out of the single instant when his vindication was denied by the capricious fate.

- Skhraal during the Great Crusade as immortalized by a remembrancer -

ARMAGUERRA

Armaguerra's real name has been long forsaken for a monicker rooted in some ancient Terran dialect. "Weapon of War" or "To arm for war" are loosely translated meanings of his current name.

Armaguerra has served under Warsmith Vhorrax's leadership since the Great Crusade, but he has long ago found a more inspiring guide in Khorne Even before the Heresy was unveiled, Armaguerra's obsession for the destruction and annihilation of its enemies opened the ways of the Blood God to his soul. Soon, what were only whispers in the back of his mind became loud voices, ordering him to kill, main, and burn without restraint.

As the Iron Warriors fell from grace and became renegades into the Eye of Terror, his allegiance with the Lord of War became absolute: he was sure that the Iron Warriors where the epitome of the Blood Father's will, their total dedication to war and annihilation the living embodiment of the God of War dominion.

It was only logical that Armaguerra relished in the new allegiance with the World Eaters. However, he considered them only barbaric and imperfect tools of Khorne. Where Warsmith Vhorrax tried to contain the maddened influence of the Blood god over his Iron Warriors, Armaguerra represented the gate through the corruption brought by the World Eaters flew into the IV Legion's ranks.

Armaguerra's true ascent came when he challenged the World Eaters' Terminator Champion Murdax, a towering brute of flesh and ceramite, in a ritual duel sanctioned by Khorne's favour. The battle was a spectacle of brutality and skill, ending with Armaguerra ripping the champion's head and claiming his massive chainfist Angelripper for himself, a weapon he still wields as both a trophy and a symbol of his dominance.

With that victory, Armaguerra became the undisputed Terminator Champion of the Iron Butchers, leading a cadre of battle-hardened terminators called the Skull Crushers. Under his command, they swore allegiance not just to the Warband, but directly to Armaguerra and the Blood God. Their loyalty transcends even Vhorrax's authority, one of the many cracks within the Iron Butchers' fragile equilibirum.

While Armaguerra still fights under Vhorrax's banner, his ambitions are clear. He both admires and loathes the Warsmith: admiration for the power Khorne has granted Vhorrax, and resentment for Vhorrax's constant struggle against the Blood God's will. Armaguerra sees this as a weakness and proof that Vhorrax is unworthy of Khorne's blessings.

To Armaguerra, the ultimate offering to Khorne would be Vhorrax's skull, a prize worthy of a warlord and the only obstacle between him and his rightful rulership over the Iron Butchers.

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PANOPLY OF WAR

While many servants of the Blood God are content enough to take the skulls of their greatest opponents as a testament to their skills and offers for the Lord of Skulls, Armaguerra takes pride in collecting personal items from the strongest foes he has vanquished. Many of those weapons and artefacts are displayed in his chamber, but few of the greatest, and most powerful, form up Armaguerra's paraphernalia:

1. The pelt of a massive Fenrisian Wolf, slew in combat along a Space Wolf Champion
2. His trophy rack, sporting his most recent killings
3. The tusks of a mastodontic xeno beast, unleashed against Armaguerra's Terminators by a Drukhari beastmaster
4. The head of a Bad Moonz' Warpboy's copper staff
5. An ancient combi-plasma taken from a fallen Terminator of the Angels Vermillion
6. The skull of a four-armes xeno-axemaster
7. The icon ripped from a Brazen Minotaurs Champion's shield, corrupted and fused with Armaguerra's armour by the Immaterium influence
8. A collection of worthy trophies: the helmet of an unknown Space Marine Captain, the head of an Ork Warboss, and countless medals, badges, and talismans taken from as many high-ranking dead opponents
9. The whole suit of an Indomitus-pattern Terminator armour taken from a Black Templar Sergeant
10. The tusked helmet ripped from the shoulders of a Word Bearers' Dark Apostle
11. Angelripper, an ancient pattern of chainfist taken from a World Eaters killed in a single duel. It is said to have tasted the blood of an entire squad of Dark Angels under the walls of the Imperial Palace on Terra.

The Maul and his squad advanced through the dark forest, its trees festooned with human entrails and decorated with men nailed to the trunks. A dying woman, caged in a gibbet swinging from the top branches, wailed to him, pleading for him to free her.

The Maul smiled under the armoured faceplate. She thought they were their saviours!

Gragath, the World Eaters' hunter, sniffed the air with the stump he had for nose.

"The enemy is close, I can smell the flesh tainted by the God of Plague"

The Maul looked again to the corpses the enemy had left, the woman was now muttering quietly. He noticed the weeping sores and the scabs covering her skin.

"Burn the dead and the living" he ordered "We need fresh water and we cannot allow the plague to taint it.

As the Chaos Marine on his left started to bathe everything in flames, the woman started screaming.

Black Culsu hanging from the balustrade of a hive spire, ready to unleash his raptors

Special Units

The Iron Butchers are not known for ornate hierarchies or elaborate military traditions. Their doctrine is one of directness, brutality, and ruthless efficiency, and their organisation reflects that. Squads are assembled, broken, and reformed as needed, with little regard for ceremony or standardisation. There is no room for frills in a Warband where survival is measured in battles won and blood spilled.

Yet, through years of ceaseless warfare,a few distinct formations have emerged: groups of warriors whose purpose, methods, or beliefs have set them apart. These special units were not crafted by design but forged through necessity, obsession, or the sheer force of will of their leaders. Whether born of hybridisation, religious fervour, or the twisted pursuit of aphoteosis, they are rare exceptions in a Warband otherwise defined by its brutal uniformity.

Though their origins and functions vary, each of these units reflects some facet of what the Iron Butchers have become: scarred, savage, and shaped by endless war. In the next pages, we will explore these outliers, those formations too distinct to be ignored, yet too brutal to be anything but Iron Butchers.

BASTARD SQUADS

When Lord Vhorrax forged the Iron Butchers by uniting elements of the World Eaters and the Iron Warriors, the two factions kept themselves isolated. Training drills, duels, and even campaigns were conducted with mutual purpose but separate execution, with squads being formed either of Iron Warriors or World Eaters, never both.

But the divisions began to erode as the years dragged on and the warband bled through attrition and unending conflict. Some squads, worn thin by constant warfare, were reinforced with warriors from the other Legion. Iron Warriors who had gradually embraced the worship of the Blood God began to join the ranks of the berserkers.

Over time, the distinction between the IV and XII Legions became less and less evident, and the new recruits, albeit being trained and donned in the colour of one of the two Legions, started to see the distinction between the two sides as blurred and meaningless.

Soon, squads in which Iron Warriors and World Eaters fought side-by-side became the most widespread type of unit within the Iron Butchers.

Called "bastard squads" for their hybrid nature, those types of squads aren't, however, standardised in the slightest, and can range from heavy weaponry teams to close-combat squads no dissimilar to the World Eaters berserkers.

Mistaking the nature of the bastard squads for brotherhood would be a huge misunderstanding: while the Iron butchers have almost accepted their dual nature, infighting and rivalry for survival have just switched from a factionalism phenomenon to an individualistic one. Whether Iron Warriors fight side-by-side with World Eaters, they are always ready to cut each other's throats to gain more power within the warband.

BLACK BANES

Taking their name from the monicker of their leader Culsu, the Black Banes are the oldest and one of the most feared gang within the Iron Butchers, as they already existed within the World Eaters 24th Heavy Cadre before Warmisth Vhorrax unified the two sides.

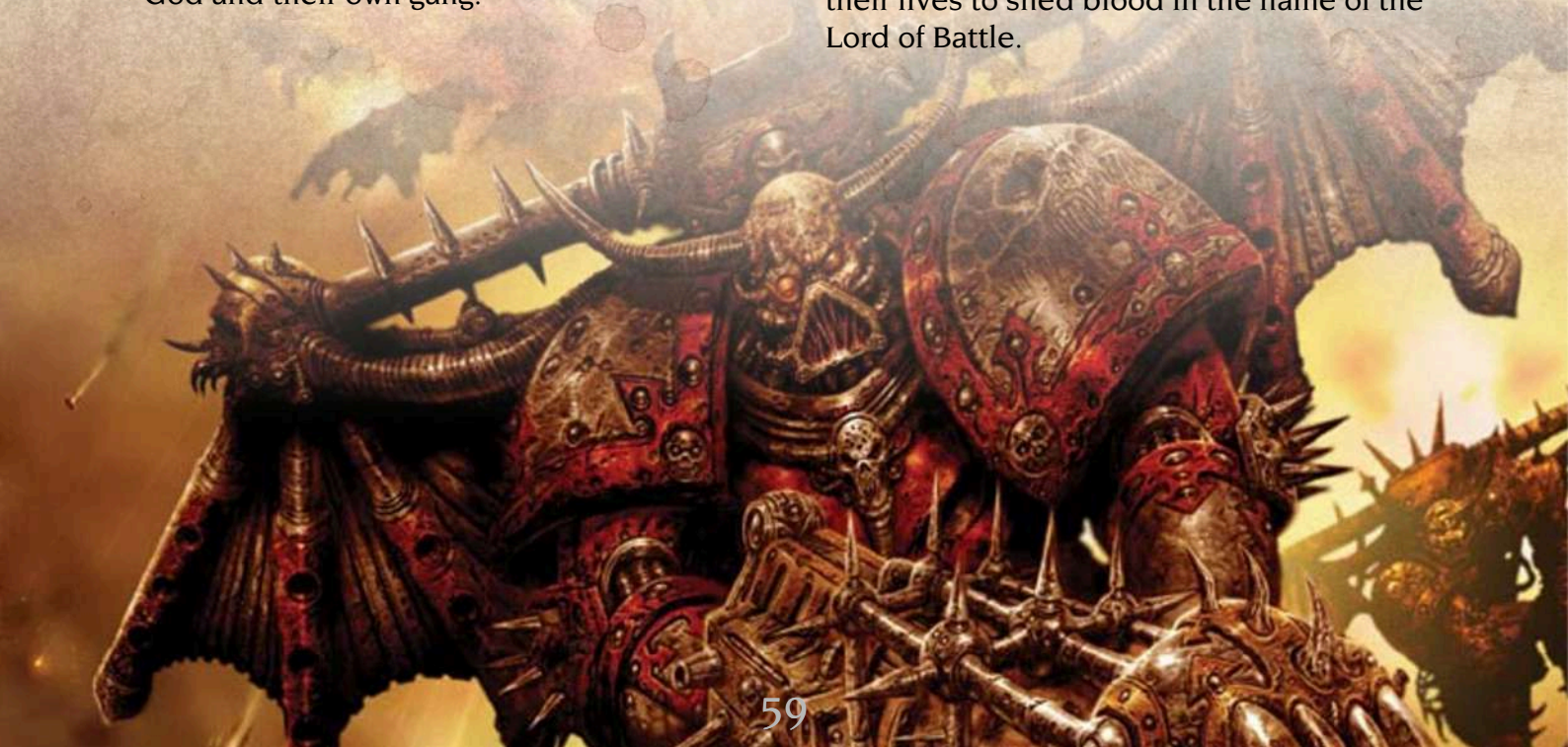
Commanded by Culsu the black, and made up only by World Eaters, the gang was initially formed by the original members of his Legion Destroyer jump-pack squad. Despite the fall into chaos and the worship of the Blood God, the Black Banes never renounced their destroyer heritage. As time and attrition wear down his men and weapons, Culsu slowly replaced the casualties with new members, and the rare destroyer weapons with less sophisticated but not less fearful weapons: grenades exploding in corroding acid-fumes, flamers spewing chem-fire, and bolters loaded with plutonium-core ammo.

Even their close combat weapon are made more lethal, their talons and chainblades anointed in a mixture of toxic sludge and the Black Banes own blood, mixed in the opened skulls of their slain foes during a pre-battle ritual to honour both the Blood God and their own gang.

The cuts inflicted by those blades corrode flesh and taint blood, dooming their foes to death even when their wound are not, apparently, life-threatening.

As the the Black Banes walk into battle amidst chemical fire and corroding fumes, their armour get scorched and their red paints flakes and burns off, leaving their armour blackened: for the Black Banes, the blacker their armour is after a battle, the more they have sow death and deastruction in Khorne's name. The armour is repainted red each time, so they can keep track of their deeds each time they go to war. It is not surprising that Culsu's armour is usually the blackest amongst the Black Banes, with little to no red left after each engagement.

Into battle, the Black Banes are often the first troops to be deployed, detached alone in the heart of the enemy territory to rip it out before the full-scale onslaught of the Iron Butchers is unleashed. Being one of the Black Banes is to transcend the even brutality of the savage Iron Butchers, to become a brotherhood bound in blood and death under the command of the savagest World Eaters of the Warband. Yet, there is no greater honour for those who dedicate their lives to shed blood in the name of the Lord of Battle.



Skull Crushers

Terminators are among the most terrifying foes one can face on the battlefield, and the Skull Crushers are no exception. Clad in Tactical Dreadnought armours and embued with the fury of the Blood God, these warriors are the unrelenting hammer of the Iron Butchers, crushing everything in their path with overwhelming force.

Every Skull Crusher has pledged his soul to Khorne and his blade to Armaguerra, the Warband's Terminator Champion. Loyalty to him is total, and even Lord Vhorrax knows that he must proceed carefully when approaching the Skull Crushers, cause they bow to none but Armaguerra. Their leader's influence is also reflected in their beliefs: no warrior can don a Terminator suit unless they swear eternal fealty to the Blood God and prove their worth in blood and battle.

The rarity of the Terminator armours within the Iron Butchers means that only the most violent and skilled warriors are allowed to enter the Skull Crushers, and when one of them falls in battle, a brutal tournament is held where warriors from all the Iron Butchers' ranks fight to the death for the right to claim the vacant suit.

The have managed to slowly build an armoury of eleven Terminator armours, some recovered and restored from defeated enemies, yet Armaguerra refuses to field them all.

His obsession with the sacred number eight is such that he find the idea of fielding squads of any number but eight blasphemous. Rather than break this doctrine, he hoards damaged suits and rebuilds them from salvaged wreckage, determined to forge sixteen in total, so that he may one day command two full squads of eight.

On the battlefield, the Skull Crushers are the Iron Butchers' sledgehammer. They are deployed when all subtlety is lost and total devastation is the only solution. Their advance is a slow, thundering inevitability, more akin to the coming of a tsunami than the deployment of a military unit. Yet for all their strength, they are not adaptable and cannot be relied upon for anything but complete annihilation: they do not, want not, and cannot hold ground, garrison outposts, or stand in defence. They only advance as a relentless and unstoppable force of nature, howling their allegiance to their leader and their God as they butcher everything in their path.

Flesh Forged

Lord Vhorrax has little interest in cultivating his persona towards his Chaos Marines: he rules by the right of might, not thanks to charisma or inspirational leadership. Yet, the sheer power emanating from him is enough for some Iron Butchers to look at him as someone who transcends even the limits of the Astartes. To some, the fusion and rework of his flesh with his armour is considered the paramount expression of the power of the Blood God mixed with the arcane and forgotten lore of dark technology.

Although this idolatry is limited within the Warband, it has some followers nonetheless, both World Eaters and Iron Warriors, who seek to twist their flesh and reforge it with their weapons in a mimicry of Warsmith perfection.

Some of those Traitor Astartes limit themselves at installing bionics, cabling them with their flesh, or seeking, rather than avoiding, the fusion of their body with their armour. But others go further, trying to become something different altogether.

The mean doesn't matter as long as the goal is achieved: pacts with the Khorne or even other Dark Gods are made while others ask the dark mechanicum hereteks to be infected with flesh-changing viruses.

Many fall to their doom, twisted by the same gift they sought until their biology is unable to accommodate the change anymore, becoming masses of twisted flesh and iron and meeting their end either by the collapse of their body or by the merciless bolt round from their former comrades.

Who survives, however, becomes what is known as a Flesh Forged, a cadre of mutilators and obliterators who follow the Warsmith into battle to stand close to his unholy perfection.

The Flesh Forged constitutes no more than a handful of warriors who follow Vhorrax whenever he goes: are they trying to protect him, bask in the unholy light of his chaotic glory, or even keep an eye on him in case his bitterness towards the Blood God would make him turn against his master?

No one knows, and even Vhorrax doesn't care. When the Warsmith walk, the Flesh Forged unleash a barrage of heavy fire and cut through infantry with their biomechanical talons, allowing Vhorrax to disregard any lesser foe and focus on his true goal.

Fractured Unity

Despite the Warband as a whole sharing one goal, existence, and rulership under Lord Vhorrax's iron grip, the uniformity is only superficial. Power struggles, shifting beliefs, and the constant cycle of casualties and new recruiters make the Iron Butchers a complex tapestry of factionalism. Gangs are formed around Aspiring Champions and leaders, or gathering individuals with a shared background.

While they are still Iron Butchers, they live and fight as a separate entity. From a tactical point of view, this allows the gangs a high degree of independence and specialisation, but, on the other hand, only exacerbates the already feeble unity. Some gangs, such as Armaguerra's Skull Crushers or the Black Banes led by Culsu, are deeply rooted in the warband history and hold undeniable power and autonomy. Still, the majority of gangs are nothing more than a ragged bunch of Marines uniting their forces to survive in the merciless environment that is the Iron Butchers.

Some of those count no more than a handful of heretic Astartes, and many do not last more than a few battles before they are broken into pieces either by casualties or rivalry with other gangs. In the next pages, we will explore some examples of minor gangs within the Iron Butchers.

The Despisers

The Despisers are one of the most experienced gangs among the Iron Butchers and, while their numbers fluctuate greatly over time, one of the largest Iron Warrior gangs.

The Despisers try to hold to the IVth Legion ancient heritage and beliefs: that the iron is strong and pure. While they acknowledge the nature of Chaos and the power of the God of War, they try to deny the Blood Father and his Red Path.

This refusal often sets them apart not only from their World Eater cousins, but also from the Iron Warrior brothers who have fall to the lure of Chaos and the bloodlust of Khorne. Yet their skills are too valuable for the Warband for them to be cast aside, or even executed. The Despisers cold-mind makes tem ideal tank operators, siege-lines builders, and heavy-weapons operators. They've even adapted IVth Legion close-assault doctrines to fit the merciless ways of the Iron Butchers' warfare, walking side by side with their Khornate brothers as blunt-force tool, funneling their bitterness into a weapon but without falling prey of their bloodlust as their brothers and cousins do.

It would be easy to think that their opposition to the Ruinous Powers is final and unsheakable, but in truth, their struggle against the lures of Chaos is endless.

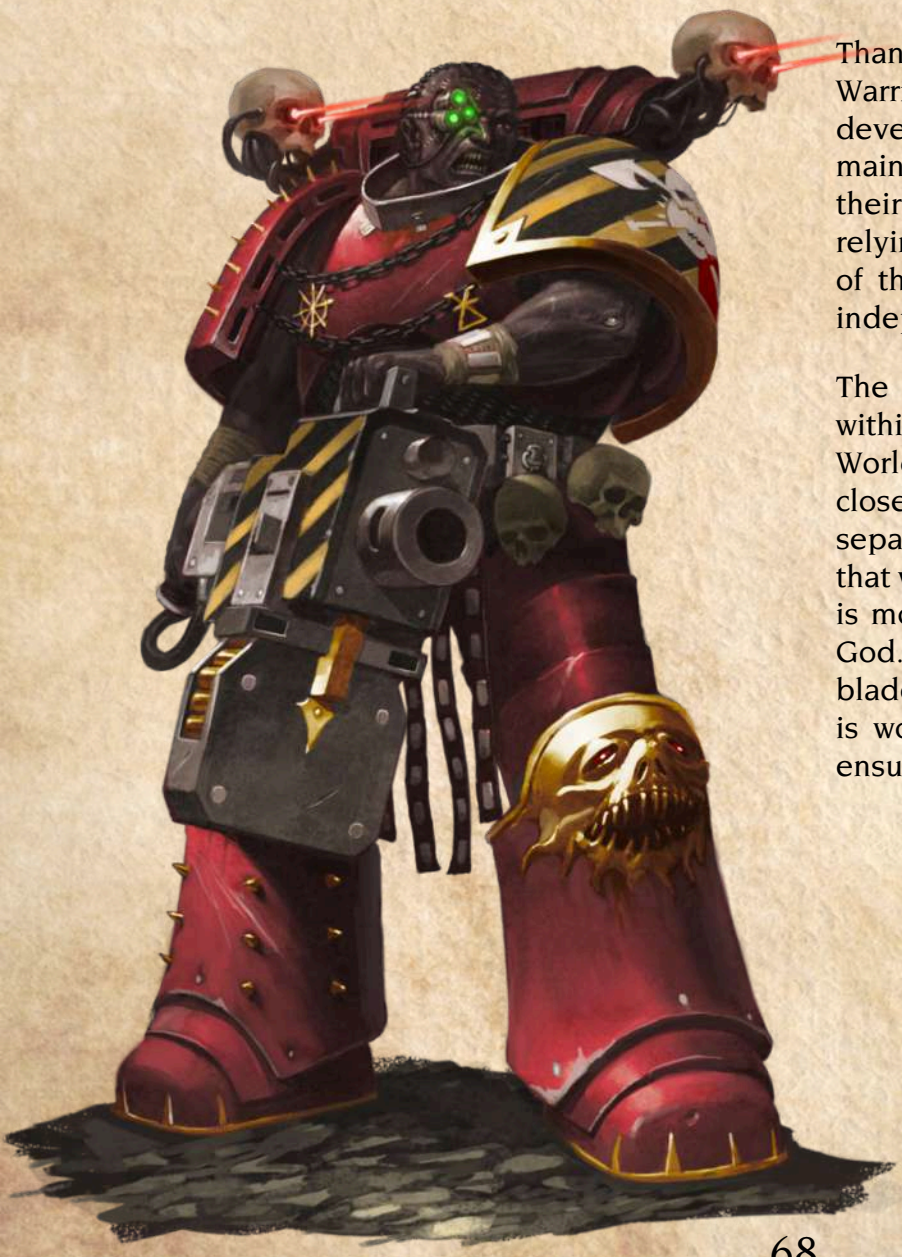
Many among them bear the scars of Warp exposure or Khorne's unwanted blessings: boons they never asked for, chaos marks and warped limbs they mutilate and excise to replace with cold bionics. They have become half-men, half-machines fueled not by devotion to the Blood God, but by pure hatred and spite.

Their life is a constant battle, a fight on all sides against the Dark Gods and their own Warband, which sees them as nothing more than deluded fools. Still, the Despisers endure.

KHORNE'S ROAR

The Khorne's Roar is a small gang, numbering only a squad of World Eaters' havocs, who have fully embraced the well-known saying: Khorne cares not from where the blood flows, only that it does.

The Roar approach to warfare, and thus Khorne's devotion, is simple: shredding your enemies with heavy firepower brings more death, blood, and souls to the realm of Khorne than chainswords and blades do. Khorne's Roar do not abandon the preference of some good old bloodshed, though, and so its hacos prefer to destroy their enemies in the bloodiest and most gruesome way.



As a result, they prefer to rely on ammo-based heavy weapons: heavy bolters, chain and autocannons that tore bodies to bloody ribbons with a hail of bullets, or even missile launchers that turn enemies into a rain of severed limbs and exploded guts.

The preference for this kind of weaponry makes the Roar a terrific anti-infantry unit, but the absence of lascannons or multimelta means that their punch against heavy armoured targets is greatly diminished. The squad cares not, however, and they walk the battlefield unleashing an everflowing barrage of bullets, so much that they are usually accompained by vat-grown seervitors carrying heavy crates of ammo, to feed their ever-hungry cannons.

Thanks to the proximity with their Iron Warriors' cousins, the Khorne's Roar has developed and cultivated repairing and maintenance skills that allow them to keep their heavy weaponry operational without relying on any other gang or internal faction of the Iron Butchers, winning them more independence and respect.

The Roar is a more unique than rare case within the Iron Butchers of a whole squad of World Eaters turning away from the pure close-combat philosophy, and even separate from it completely, yet it proves that within the Butchers' brutal creed, there is more than one path to serve the Blood God. Whether by chainaxe or cannon, by blade or barrage, the Blood Father's favour is won with slaughter, and Khorne's Roar ensures the blood never stops flowing.

Cult of Hellfire

While it is well-known that Khorne revels in bloodshed and the collection of the skulls of the mighiest foes for the Skull Throne, many secondary aspects of the God of War are often overlooked or ignored.

One of those aspects is, accordingly to the Cult of Hellfire, the dominion of the Lord of Battle over flames and fire.

The Cult sees fire as the primordial destructor, and one of the first, if not the absolute first, weapons of mass destruction in the history of warfare. Many clues have been scattered through time to sustain their beliefs: isn't Khorne's dominion a land of volcanoes raging with burning magma? And doesn't the legend tells of the time when Khârn, greatest amongst Khorne's heroes, immolated World Eaters and Emperor's Children alike with a flamer on legendary Skalathrax?

The Cult venerates this belief with an obsession for incendiary warfare. Its members are expert wielders of flamers, meltaguns, and phosphorus grenades. Yet, due to the narrow nature of their arsenal, they rarely operate as a full squad. Instead, they are embedded as fire support throughout other Iron Butcher units, serving as special weapon operatives and purging corridors, bunkers, and trenches in searing blazes.

The Cult influence within the Iron Butchers has grown steadily until the events of Bianes, where, despite the Iron Butchers' victory, the faith in the Cult beliefs has been put to the test.

As the Iron Butchers put the whole planet afire, the Cult expected a sign would come: a rain of fire, a sky torn in molten wrath, or even the manifestation of Kaal'vragah the Emberborn, the Bloodthirster they believe to be the living avatar of inferno and arson.

But no sign came.

Disillusionment spread. Some declared the Cult misled; others claimed their god had turned his gaze elsewhere. Many abandoned the flame-bound path, leaving the Cult diminished, its blaze reduced to embers.

The Decapitators

The Decapitators were, originally, a small piratical Warband formed by a handful of Triarii veterans from the XIIth Legion that was merged with the Iron Butchers, becoming a gang within the larger faction. With time they started to recruit and train new-blood World Eaters from the void-born dregs of the Iron Maw, choosing them for their natural understanding of void life and warfare.

Still, attrition and casualties took their toll on the gang, and one by one the original Triarii members were killed, leaving the Decapitators as a very rare example of a gang formed only by new-blood World Eaters who haven't known no other banner than the one of the Iron Butchers, and no other home than the Iron Maw.

Now, the Decapitators are the Iron Butchers' most fearsome boarding unit, always amongst the first to breach an enemy vessel's hull. This risky but privileged position, first into boarding, first into the loot, has granted the Decapitators access to a trove of scavenged wargear of the best quality possible. As a result, they are amongst the better equipped warriors within the Iron Butchers: void-sealed Mark III armours, Astartes assault shotguns, and large slabs of plasteel refitted as boarding shields.

They are also the appointed overseers of the Iron Maw defence, leaving the rest of the Iron Butchers free to bathe in blood on planetary fields. Many within the Warband see their work as something useful, but secondary, as they cannot enjoy the bloodbath of entire armies, or watch cities collapse under an unrelenting barrage.

The Decapitators do not care: their link with the Iron Maw is too strong to be refused, and for them there is no greater task than fight and die for her.

Twisted Brotherhood

Once part of the Despisers, the Brotherhood warrior were members of the IVth Legion of unshakable discipline, who refused the temptations of the Warp and clung to their primarch's ideals. But that conviction shattered when, during the siege of the high-spired hive of Telvexar, the tower they were assaulting collapsed under a brutal Iron Butchers barrage. Trapped beneath dozens of meters of debris and stone in the hive's sewer catacombs, with vox-links dead and the war rumbling far above, the survivors faced a death they could not accept: starvation in the dark, forgotten like vermin.

Weeks passed. The wounds festered and they started to die, one by one. Then the whispers came.

In their desperation, with no hope of escape and no chance of glory, the few survivors began to listen. Possession was reclutantly accepted as the last resource to avoid not just death, but defeat. Bargains were struck in the dark, and the neverborn poured in. Bones bent. Flesh twisted. Steel fused with sinew. With their new powers the rubble was pierced effortlessly, but it was not Iron Warriors that emerged, but something else, something changed.

Now fully possessed, the Twisted Brotherhood became a rare sight within the Iron Butchers: a unit of daemon-possessed Astartes, used as the ultimate shock troop or against the most nightmarish foes. No chainaxe or bolter could strike fear like the Brotherhood's howling charge. No flesh could stand before the corrupted might of their fused forms.

Their end came as violently as their rebirth. During the disastrous events of Tocrida, when a mighty Lord of Change named Krr'ess'xtluth clawed into the Materium, and erased from existence the possessed marines along with countless other Iron Butchers, daemon engines and war machines.

Forgotten by their former brothers. The Twisted Brotherhood remains a cautionary tale of what lies at the edge of desperation, and what even the strongest may accept to escape a coward's death.

The Iron Maw

The Iron Maw is an ancient Strike Cruiser formerly known as the Dawn of Blood. It was originally part of the World Eaters' fleet during the Horus Heresy and now serves as the operational base of the Iron Butchers

. Originally intended to be a swift vessel for boarding operations, the strike cruiser has been gradually modified over the millennia, prioritizing overwhelming firepower at the cost of speed and manoeuvrability, a process that culminated in the installation of a powerful nova cannon, taken from a loyalist wrecked ship, baptized the Wrath of the Wargod.

Forged on Sarum during the Horus Heresy, the Dawn of Blood was the flagship of World Eaters' 24th Assault Cadre led by Azhoth. Following the Siege of Terra, it vanished into the Warp with Azhoth's 24th Assault Cadre. Over centuries, the warband and the ship decayed, their humanity eroded by time and corruption.

The vessel was eventually claimed by Warsmith Vhorrax, who betrayed and slew Azhoth, uniting the remnants of the Iron Warriors and World Eaters into the Iron Butchers. Vhorrax renamed the ship the Iron Maw, symbolising his warband's brutal and relentless nature.

The ship's ancient Machine Spirit, born of the daemon-tainted forge world, revels in violence, making the Iron Maw a fearsome but feral war vessel. Measuring approximately five kilometres long and armed with unparalleled weaponry, the Iron Maw prowls the void like a predator from a dark, forgotten era.

Captain Heuldrasia

The Iron Maw's Machine Spirit is a feral, bloodthirsty entity that despises its mongrel crew and mourns its desecrated name. It views the Iron Warriors with contempt and the allied World Eaters as failures who abandoned their path, her role is tolerated only through constant offerings of blood and sacrifice in the form of the ones to dare to control her. Many who have attempted to bond with its Anima Machina were consumed, their minds burned, leaving behind lifeless husks.

For decades, the Iron Maw cycled through officers and captains, each failing to tame its murderous will until the arrival of Heuldrasia.

Her origins are shrouded in mystery. Some say she was a disgraced Imperial Navy captain who struck a deal with Vhorrax after nearly destroying her own ship in battle. Others claim she was nothing but a crew-slave who slowly went through the command-bridge ranks until she finally seized control of the Iron Maw by sheer force of will. Whatever the truth is, Heuldrasia has commanded the vessel for over a century, a time during which the ship has continued to feast upon the lives of many subordinate officers. Yet Heuldrasia herself has continued her work, unharmed.

Over time, the command throne and Heuldrasia have merged into a grotesque symbiosis. Her corrupted flesh and mechanical augmentations have fused with the throne, reshaped at her request into an instrument of war, no longer human but a savage nature. Together, Heuldrasia and the Iron Maw prowl the void like a monstrous predator, hunting the galaxy's most formidable prey. Skulls taken from boarded vessels' Captain and champions are impaled on the spikes of her throne, trophies of the ship's endless hunger and her Captain's fury.

The Daemonastrolabium

To navigate the Immaterium without the need for Imperial Navigators, the Iron Butchers rely on the Daemonaustrolabium, a monstrous device constructed by their Warpsmiths and Dark Mechanicum Heretek.

The exact functioning of the demonic machine is beyond the comprehension of any sane and pious man, but what is certain is that this daemonic compass is powered by a trapped Slaaneshi daemon, a Lady of the Void captured in the fringes of the Koronus Expanse.

The daemon is bound through arcane binding rituals, punishments and sacrifices, to force it to chart paths through the Warp. Those paths, which would be incomprehensible to the mortals, are translated into readable machine-code by the hereticsal engine, and then the warpsmiths and hereteks determine the final route with thier calculus.

While effective, the device is highly unstable: constant sacrifices are required to sustain the daemon's cooperation, and errors can lead to unpredictable Warp exits. Still, to the Iron Butchers, the Daemonaustrolabium is far more effective than relying on rogue Navigators, making it a critical tool in their survival.

Forge World of Construction.....Sarum
Classification.....Persecutor Class Assault Cruiser
Lenght.....5,63 Kilometers
Width.....1,2 Kilometers abeam

Weight.....Unknown (~ 36 megatonnes calculated)
Crew.....Unknown (~85.000 calculated)
Main engines.....Twin Mark II Plasma Engines
Secondary engine.....Mark Unknown

1. Command-Cathedral housing, amongst other things, the Command Bridge, Astropathic choir and the Blood Shrine
2. Ancient glass-dome now employed for the hellish Daemonastrolabium
3. Side las-batteries
4. Twin Ursus Claws
5. Heavy armoured prow for spearing attacks
6. Khorne-blessed, keel-mounted bombardment cannon
7. Gargantuan skulls of xeno beasts slain by the Iron Butchers
8. Mask-shaped landing bay for bombers and minor crafts launch

Void Shields.....abnormal, heretic-tech detected
Warp Capable.....Yes
Warp Drive.....Mark unknown
Hull.....non-standard, heavily modified

Hull composition.....abnormal, xeno alloy detected
Distinguishing marks.....REDACTED
Allegiance.....Archenemy of Mankind
Order.....Destroy on sight

9. Macrocannon batteries. Hecutor-pattern plasma batteries suspected for the main batteries
10. Torpedoes launching bays: top rows for boarding, lower rows for plasma and melta torpedoes
11. Unknown weapon. Suspected looted or repurposed Fra'al ether cannon
12. Armoured shield (with another skull-trophy) protecting the void shields generators
13. Side-lance burners of different sizes, unknown patterns
14. Upper deck housing the Astartes quarters, arenas and Great War Hall

Tarraco, a master blacksmith reapairing a World Eater's helmet. He is one of the few thralls who have earned the right to bear the Warband's symbol

Murk Dwellers

To try to classify and order the denizens of the lower levels of the Iron Maw would be an undertaking that would drive even the most cold-hearted bureaucrats of the Adeptus Administratum to madness.

If Imperial ships are notoriously grim and treacherous environments, a void ship under the influence of Chaos is the pure ambodiment of anarchy.

Hundreds of clans, families, gangs, cults, and even grotesque parodies of businesses are born, grow, and die in the matter of months in the lightless belly of the Iron Maw.

And yet, some of them have been so successful in their survival numerous that they have endured for years, even decades, swelling in the number of thousands.

In this final section, we will examine the major fighting forces of humans and abhumans that accompany the Iron Butchers.

Blood Pigs

Within the dozen thousand mortal souls that populated the Iron Maw, only a few hundred are deemed worthy of recognition by the Iron Butchers. High-ranking ship officers, master artificers, surgeons, weaponsmiths, gore-mages and witches, and others whose expertise made them irreplaceable elements within the Warband hold a position of privilege, albeit a precarious one. These individuals are granted to wear the Iron Butchers own symbol. They are given better food and shelter, and even experience a measure of safety.

Apart from this small elite, the writhing humanity populating the Iron Maw is nothing more than a wrecked mass whose life is a merciless grind of extenuating labour leading to their death. These tens of thousands are nameless being in the eyes of their masters, not even worthy of the term “humans”, and just dismissed as dregs, scum, trash-meat, or simply slaves. They are a rabble formed by the miserable population enslaved from conquered worlds, defeated enemies forced into servitude, and void-born beings unlucky enough to call the Iron Maw their home. The dregs quickly learn that being ignored by their masters is nothing but a blessing, and so they work tirelessly to satisfy their lords, praying that their labour is good enough to keep the Iron Butchers' attention away.

To survive in this perpetual abandonment they have created thier own parody of a society, organizing themselves into gangs, tribes, and cults, each built around their roles, locations, and even shared deformities.

Among the largest and bloodiest of these is a slaughter-cult known as the Blood Pigs. Each member bears a tattoo, brand, or mark in the shape of a severed pig’s head, with variations incorporating crossed knives, barbed wire wrapping the head, or nails driven into its skull.

The cult is led by a mysterious demagogue known as the Slaughterman, whose identity isn’t clear: it could be the same individual who created the Blood Pigs over a hundred years ago, or it could be just a title inherited by each new leader of the Cult once the predecessor dies. Utterly loyal to the Master of Massacre, the Blood Pigs see their own lives as offerings, blood meant to spill and be consumed in Khorne’s name. Their fanaticism makes them the ideal cannon fodder for the Iron Butchers: no mission is too dangerous, no sacrifice too great.

They are spilled on the battleground with only the vaguest orders and equipped with nothing but the weapons they managed to scavenge or crudely put together by themselves. It is the responsibility of their many iconarchs and blessed blades to guide them and achieve their goal: how that is done is of no concern to their Chaos Marine master.

During frontal assaults, the Blood Pigs eagerly hurl themselves at enemy lines, soaking up fire and drawing the enemy’s attention. They charge through minefields and open terrain, their blood trying to satiate Khorne’s unquenchable thirst, while their deaths reveal the enemy’s strength and tactics. The Blood Pigs care not, since their deaths in battle means they are still honouring Khorne by shedding their blood in the Blood God’s name.

BRUTES

The brutes are a savage bunch of mutants, abhumans, beastmen, ogryns, and other twisted creatures of different shapes and sizes. The only thing that really unites them is their inhuman strength, stamina, and ferocity.

The brutes don't have a sole commander nor a shared culture or beliefs, but they are formed instead by many packs ruled by the strongest and most brutal among them, who rise as leaders through sheer violence. For a brute, challenging another pack-leader is always a live-or-die situation, as duels are always to the death. Whoever is the last standing is the winner and the rulership over the pack is undisputed, at least until another challenger steps in.

The pack-leader rulership is, however, often short-lived as the life of the brutes is an ever-flowing stream of violence. Apart from the constant duels, for a brute death can come in dozens of ways: crushed by the giant machines they man within the ship, killed by the cocktail of drugs that they are often addicted to, or simply snuffed out on the battlefield.

Within the Iron Maw, the brutes offer their services to the human crew performing some of the heaviest and most dangerous labour imaginable: shovelling fossilized promethium in the ship's furnaces, turning the great shell-loading wheels of the macrocannon batteries, unloading the hundredweight boxes of the cargo ships, or hauling the maddened dreadnoughts and daemon engines into their containment chambers. All of this is done in exchange for food, crude weapons, tribal trinkets, and the drugs they so hungrily crave: narcotics, combat stims, hallucinogens, and anything else that numbs their pain or stokes their fury.

They have claimed an abandoned habitation deck deep in the Iron Maw's industrial guts as their lair. This section is a rusted, half-collapsed labyrinth of cracked bulkheads, flickering lights, and constantly dripping sludge. Skulls line the walls. Old shrines to long-forgotten gods rot alongside altars to Khorne caked in gore and festooned in entrails. Here, the Brutes feud, fight, and breed.

It is on the battlefield, though, that the brutes show their true worth as a blunt yet effective weapon, so much that the Iron Butchers are always looking for more and more creatures to replace their losses.

Slaves either bought or taken by force, mutants born in the bowel of the Iron Maw itself, or smaller groups of mercenaries willing to join their forces with the Chaos Marine army: it doesn't matter where they came from, as long as they can enlarge the numbers of this bestial horde.

As a proof of their worth the brutes are not wasted and sacrificed on the battlefield as mere cannon fodder as the Blood Pigs are: while nowhere near to the might of the Chaos Marines, the brutes are one of the few troops that can outlive the fearsome combat doctrine of the Iron Butchers. Heavily armoured and wielding massive melee weapons or brutish heavy stubbers, the brutes' charge can overwhelm and break even the most disciplined army.

What follows once they are unleashed is not a battle, it is a massacre. The Brutes do not retreat. They do not take prisoners. They do not break. In the frenzy inducted by both their own bllodlust and the combat-drugs pumping into their veing, they stop ripping armour and flesh alike only when torn apart or when there is nothing left to kill.

Maw's Teeth

Unlike the Blood Pigs and the Brutes, the Maw's Teeth aren't drawn from the dregs of the Iron Maw, nor are they fielded on the battleground to do the dirty work for the Iron Butchers.

The Maw's Teeth are the defenders of the Iron Maw, twisted creatures whose only means in life is to protect the Iron Maw from outsider forces. Their birth is said to be not orchestrated by the Iron Butchers, but willed by the ship herself.

In the innards of the ship, grotesquely mutated chambers once used to raise vat-grown cattle and long abandoned came back to life: organic tissue covering their walls, veins substituting cables and wires, and the very own vat-tanks transformed in amniotic sacs within were where the Teeth grew.

Twisted mutants whose flesh was interwoven with cables and wires, and whose skin was riveted and fused with metal plaques, they yet followed a design of shared deformities and, most recognisable trait, they all have teeth. Too many teeth.

Sprouting on their face in ridges, dotting their skin like pustules, and adorning their head in crowns of molars and incisors.

They appeared through the bridges without forewarning, striding the corridors like meat-puppets, ignoring questions or orders. Many were slain, killed by the suspicious crew or simply snuffed out by the Iron Butchers, who disregarded them as some mutant-cult who had traveled too far from the lower levels and were simply too annoyed by their intrusion to allow them to live.

Still, they kept coming, and they kept being killed.

Then the Iron Maw spoke, its will made manifest through screaming crew members fused into its interface nodes. Their shrieks of agony were the ship's words: a command to stop. Its "Teeth" would no longer be denied.

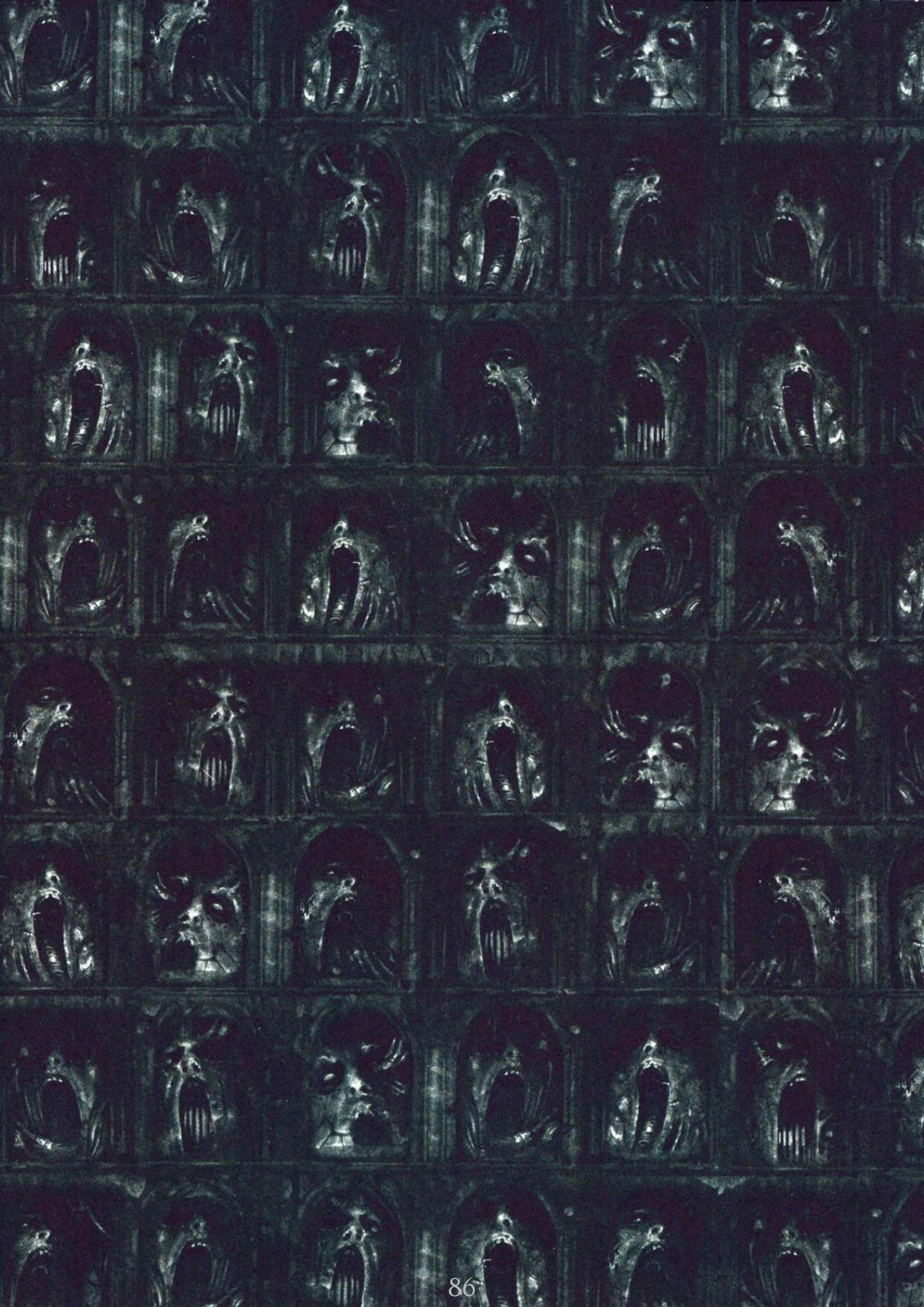
From that moment on, the Maw's Teeth were left alone. They slowly started to spread, becoming a common sight in the main decks of the ship. Soon, the Iron Butchers recognised that those apparently harmless puppets were, in fact, an exceptional tool: as soon as the Iron Maw was boarded, the Teeth shook off their numbness and began to self-organise into a defensive force. They perfectly knew every corridor, every chokepoint and dead end, and every armed position.

While they didn't substitute the might of the Astartes, their support proved invaluable.

Following the first engagement, the Iron Butchers ordered the Maw's Teeth to be enhanced by the ship's armigers and surgeons: they were equipped with scavenged weapons, their flesh enhanced with crude bionics, and their brains surgically linked with frezon, slaught, and other combat drugs' injectors.

The Iron Maw's silence was the only approval the Iron Butchers needed.

The Teeth have been a mainstay of the Iron Maw since, a force that fights for the Iron Butchers, but is nothing more than the self-preservation instinct of the vessel made manifest.



FAQ

- **Where are the rules?**

This is a lore-first project. You won't find datasheets, points, or matched play options in here.

But if you want to field the Iron Butchers, they proxy well as World Eaters, Iron Warriors, or any bloodthirsty custom warband you like.

Khorne doesn't care where the rules come from, only that they kill.

- **Can I use this lore in my own army?**

Please do. Paint your warband in the Iron Butchers' colours. Build your own gang. Name your Champion.

Make them yours, the lore is here to inspire new blood.

- **Can I support this project?**

Yes. Here's how.

Follow the Iron Butchers on Instagram: @enter.the.butcher

Spread the Iron Butchers: Share the codex, tag your own Butcher-themed models or stories, or run a campaign set in their corner of the galaxy. Join the slaughter:

Message me if you've got ideas, names, characters, or warbands you want to pitch. Khorne thrives on collaboration.

- **Cool codex, can I get one like this?**

I accept commissions for narrative codices and faction lore!

Whether it's a Chaos warband, a loyalist Chaotic, or an original xeno species, I can help you craft something worthy of legends (or heresy).

DM me on Instagram @enter.the.butcher for inquiries.

- **Wait, is this official?**

No. This is a fan-made codex created for non-commercial use and personal enjoyment.

Credits

The Iron Butchers would have never seen the light and evolved so much without a great community of homebrewers and online friends that helped me in all the years of writing the Warband's lore.

Here are the people who helped me, either by giving me feedbacks, ideas, critiques, or just by brainstorming with me. The list is in alphabetical order.

@ancient_sokratikas
@aregons_corner
@daedalusthedominator
@jojj_the_mong
@maxernium_paints
@nostraman_butchers_
@pictures40k
@plague_champion_monnos
@smash_wargaming
@the.godemperors.new.groove
@thibalt_workshop
@unbrokeniron
@warsmith_tharrax
wolframtheregulator

Also a HUGE thanks to all the artists that have created wonderful pieces for the Iron Butchers. Here you can find the list of their Instagram profiles and the Codex pages where their artworks have been used. The list is in alphabetical order.

@aectannn Page 28,43, 55, 62, 72-73, 84, 90 (back cover page)
@anna_deligianni Pages 12,13
@arielscar_art Pages 56, 57, 60, 64-65
@art_bruray Pages 8,17, 39, 49, 50, 54, 61, 72, 73, 76-77, 80, 82
@drosatauroni Page 48
@george.abalayan Page 18-19, 36
@goga.krest Page 9, 66, 68, 69
@iamdio Page 67, 70, 71
@icono.cybernetica Page 32
@igorivanov_art Page 10, 57 (Iron Butchers logo, used multiple times), 79
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Unofficial

WARHAMMER 40,000

Publication

The Iron Butchers are one of the thousands of Warbands who have broken free from their parent Legions to fight their own war.

While the World Eaters and Iron Warriors found an ally in each other, marching united under Khorne's blood-drenched banner, they are alone against a hostile galaxy.

Imperial forces, xenos, and even other Warbands are just few of the dangers they must face.

Join their eternal war and march on the battlefield screaming a new battlecry:

Iron Within, Blood Thorughout!